THE
RIVAL SISTERS,
A
TRAGEDY.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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THE

RIVAL SISTERS.

A

TRAGEDY.

BY ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.

———Scelerate, revertere, Theseu;
Flecte ratem; numerum non habet illa suum.

OVID.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,

By Permission of the Manager.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in Italics are Additions of the Theatre.

DUBLIN:

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M,DCC,XCIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

THERE is, perhaps, nothing more uninteresting than the generality of those preliminary discourses, in which Authors too frequently lay out much of their time in talking of themselves and their works. The importance of a Man to himself is fully displayed, while the Reader yawns over the tedious page, or laughs at the rhetoric, that would persuade him he ought to be pleased. The present Writer has been unwilling, upon almost all occasions, to conform to a practice which he saw attended with so little success: But the following Tragedy is sent into the world in a manner that may require some explanation. It has not gone through the fiery trial of the Theatre; nor is it recommended by the favourable decision of an Audience. The pomp of splendid scenery, and the illusions of the skilful performer, have not awakened the public attention:—The Play ventures abroad, without having previously gained, by the advantages of representation, a character, which in the leisure of the closet is not always supported. But this circumstance, while it raises no expectation, may, on the other hand, excite a prejudice not easy to be surmounted. If it be of any value, why was it not produced in the usual form of a Public Exhibition? The reasons that influenced the Author, would lead to a long and frivolous detail. Whatever those reasons were, whether caprice, whim, peevishness, or delicacy, they were of weight to determine his conduct. His work, however, does not go forth with accusations of any kind against the Proprietors of

either Theatre: it makes no appeal, from their judgment. The fact is, it never was in their hands; and where there was no refusal, there can be no room for complaint.

It need not be dissembled, that the Play was written with a view to the Stage. It was begun and finished in the Summer 1783, at a time when the Author was disabled, by a nervous disorder in his eyes, from pursuing a more important work, which has engaged several years of his life. It was painful to read, and he found amusement necessary. He walked in green fields, made verses, and threw them upon paper in characters almost illegible. For a subject, he was not long at a loss. He remembered that Madame *de Sévigné** mentions her having attended the representation of Arpane, a Tragedy by the younger *Corneille*. The play, says that amiable Writer, though in its general style and conduct flat and insipid; was, notwithstanding, followed by all Paris, not for the sake of the poetry, but the Actress, *La Champmêlé* whom she calls the greatest prodigy the Stage ever beheld. The others were disgusting: but when the *Champmêlé* entered the scene, a murmer of applause ran through the Theatre; every heart was interested, and every eye dissolved in tears

When this country could, with pride, boast of an Actress equally followed, and perhaps with better reason; it occurred that a Tragedy, with the beauties of the original, but freed from its defects, might, at such a season, be acceptable to the Public. The defects, which drew down the judgment of so enlightened a Critic as Madame *de Sévigné*, are pointed out with minute exactness, by the judicious *Voltaire*†. From that pleasing Writer we learn, that the Tra-

* Vide her Letter 1st April, 1672.
† See his Edition of Corneille's Works.

gedy in question still keeps its rank upon the Stage, whenever an Actress of eminence wishes for an opportunity to display her talents in a principal character. The situation he observes, is interesting and pathetic: 'A princess, who has done every thing for her hero; who has delivered him from a cruel death, and sacrificed all considerations for his sake; who loves him generously; who thinks herself loved in return, and deserves to be so; who finds herself, at last, abandoned by the Man whom she adores, and betrayed by a Sister whom she also loved: 'A woman thus situated,' says *Voltaire*, 'forms the happiest subject that has come down to us from antiquity.' Notwithstanding this general account, *Voltaire's* observations, which trace the Author scene by scene, show that Madame *de Sévigné* was not mistaken in her judgment.

Shall the present Writer flatter himself that he has removed the vices of the first concoction, and substituted what is better? He has certainly endeavoured to do it. For this purpose a New Fable was necessary. The progress of the business required to be conducted in a different manner, with more rapidity, and without those languid scenes which weaken the interest, and too often border upon the dialogue of Comedy. The characters were to be cast in a new mould; and instead of definitions of the passions, their conflict, their vehemence, and their various transitions, were to be painted forth in higher colouring, than are to be found in the French composition. The Reader, therefore, is not to expect a mere translation. The Author does not scruple to say that he entered into a competition with the original; that he has aimed at a better Tragedy; and to use the words of a late elegant Writer, *he hopes he has shown some invention, though he has built upon another man's ground.*

But here again the question recurs, if the new superstructure raised upon the old foundation has any merit, why not produce it with all the advantage of

that

that celebrated Actress, who, it seems inspired the first design? The plain truth shall be the answer: When the piece was finished, the Author had his moments of self-approbation, and in his first ardour, hinted to a friend, that he intended to give it to the Stage. But self-approbation did not last long:—That glow of imagination, which (to speak the truth) is sometimes heated into a pleasing delirium with its own work, subsided by degrees, and doubt and diffidence succeeded. A Play, that might linger nine nights upon the Stage, was not the object of the Author's ambition; Whether he has been able to execute any thing better, he has not considered for a long time, nor has he now courage to determine. He has often said to himself, in the words of TULLY, *Nihil bene, nisi perfectum ingenio, elaboratum industriâ, offerri oportere*; and after adopting, in his own case, so rigid a rule, how shall he presume to say, that the production of a summer can boast either of genius, or the elaborate touches of industry?

In this irresolute state of mind, the Author's respect for the Public, who have done him, upon former occasions, very particular honour, increased his timidity: he was unwilling to appear a candidate for their favour, when he was not sure of adding to their pleasure. At present, being to give an edition of such pieces, as he has been able to produce, he could not think of keeping back the only dramatic work left upon his hands. He, therefore, sends it into the world an humble adventurer: with one of his predecessors, he says, '*Va, mon Enfant; prens ta Fortune.*' The Play amused him while, he was engaged in the writing of it, and should the candid Reader find an hour of leisure not entirely thrown away in the perusal, the Author will not think his time altogether mis-employed. He now dismisses the Piece, if not with indifference, at least with resignation; content

to

to leave the honours of the Theatre to Writers of more ambition than he possesses at present.

Non jam prima peto Mnestheus, neque vincere certo :
Quamque O ! sed saperent, quibus hoc, Neptune, dedisti.

VIRG.

——————Velanius armis,
Herculis ad postem fixis, latet abditus agro ;
Ne populum extremâ toties exoret arenâ.

HOR.

LINCOLN'S-INN,
March 4, 1786.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

PERIANDER, *King of Naxos*, - Mr. Wroughton.
THESEUS, - - - - Mr. Palmer.
PERITHOUS, - - - - Mr. Kemble.
ARCHON, *an Officer of* Periander, Mr. Packer.
ALETES, *Ambassador from* Minos,
King of Crete, - - - Mr. Caulfield.
OFFICER, - - - - Mr. Phillimore.

Women.

ARIADNE, - - - - Mrs. Siddons.
PHÆDRA, - - - - Mrs. Powell.

VIRGINS *attending on* Ariadne, *&c.*

SCENE, *the Palace of* Periander *in the Isle of* Naxos.

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THE

RIVAL SISTERS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

PERIANDER's *Palace. A violent Storm of Thunder and Lightning.*

Enter PHÆDRA *and* ARCHON.

Phædra.

AWAY! no more!—why thus purſue my ſteps?
Begone and leave me; leave me to my woes.
Arc. Yet, Phædra, be advis'd.
Phæ. Preſume no further.
Advis'd by thee! no,—let your pliant king,
Your king of Naxos, to thy treach'rous counſels
Reſign himſelf, his people, and his laws.
Thou haſt undone us all; by thee we die;
Yes, Ariadne, Phædra, Theſeus, all,
All die by thee!
Arc. Princeſs, your fears are groundleſs.
Your timorous fancy forms unjuſt ſuſpicions,
If you but knew me———
Phæ. O, too well I know thee!
This very morn 'tis fixed; yes, here your king

Gives audience to th' Ambassador of Crete;
Here in this palace; here, by your persuasion,
He means to yield us to the rage of Minos,
To my vindictive father's stern demand.
Ere that I'll see your king; here wait his coming.
And counteract thy base ungen'rous counsel.

Are. This storm of passion bears your reason down.
Let prudence guide thee. In a night like this,
Why quit your couch, and to the whirlwind's rage,
The vollied lightning, and the war of nature,
Why wilt thou thus commit thy tender frame?——

[*Thunder and lightning.*

Again that dreadful peal!—" All gracious Powers!
" What crime provokes your wrath? must this fair island,
" That long hath flourish'd in th' Ægean deep,
" Must Naxos with her sons, a blameless race,
" Burn to the centre, and the brawling waves
" Close o'er the wreck for ever?

[*Another clap of thunder.*

" *Phæ.* Oh, that burst
" Shoots horror to my soul!
" *Are.* Thus through the night
" With the wild uproar shook the groaning isle.
" Fierce rain and liquid fire in mingled torrents
" Came rushing o'er the land. The wrath of Heaven
" Rides in the tempest. Towers and sacred domes
" Fell in promiscuous ruin. Ships were dash'd,
" On pointed rocks, or swallowed in the deep.
" Destruction rages round." midst the roar,
When all things else, when ev'n the fiercest natures
Shrink from the hideous ruin, you alone
Walk through the storm, with fierce, with hagard mien,
A form that suits the dreadful wild commotion.

Phæ. Yes, with a heart, in which the storm that rages,
Surpasses all the horrors of the night.

" Yes,

" Yes, here I come supreme in misery.
" I only wake to cares unknown to him
" Who treads secure the paths of humble life,
" And thanks the gods for his obscure retreat,
" For the blest shade in which their bounty plac'd him."
'Tis you have rais'd this tempest of the soul.
You, sir, are minister; you govern here,
And bend at will an unsuspecting monarch.
To thee he yields his oracle of state;
And when with wrongs you have oppress'd mankind,
'Tis the king's pleasure; 'tis the royal will.

Arc. Unjust, ungenerous charge! have you forgot,
When first your vessel reach'd the coast of Naxos?
You sued for leave to land upon the isle,
To pray for shelter here. Ere that we heard
Theseus was with you: Theseus, whom the state
Of Athens sent a sacrifice to Minos,
A victim to absolve the annual tribute,
Impos'd by conquest: Ariadne's love,
Her generous efforts to redeem the hero,
Ev'n then were known at Periander's court,
The wond'rous story on the wings of Fame
Had reach'd our Isle; she pity'd, and she lov'd him.

Phæ. She lov'd him—Yes, she saw, and she ador'd.
Gods! who could see the graces of his youth,
His cause, his innocence, the hero's mien,
Manly and firm, yet soften'd by distress,
Gods! who could see him, and not gave entranc'd
In ecstacy and love?—What have I said?
My warmth too far transports me—ah! beware—
[*Aside.*
'Twas as you say; she pity'd, and she lov'd.

Arc. She favour'd his escape: you fled together.
To ev'ry neighb'ring isle you wing'd your flight;
You visited each realm; with prayers and tears
Wearied each court. All fear'd your father's power.
You came to Naxos; Periander's will,
Your orator, came forth. Did not I then—

Phæ. You succour'd our distress: the tear of sympathy
Stood in your eye; and you may boast your merit—
You play'd it well, sir.

Arc. This ambiguous strain
But ill requites the offices of friendship;
For you I watch'd the temper of the king,
His ebbs and flows of passion: in apt season
You landed here. Thrice hath the waning moon
Conceal'd her light, and thrice renew'd her orb,
While you, meantime, have liv'd protected here.
Each hour has seen your sister Ariadne
Rise in her charms; and now with boundless sway
She reigns supreme in Periander's heart.

Phæ. True, we have found protection from your king.
Three months have pass'd—but in that time a statesman
May change his mind. New views of interest—
New plans of policy, fair seeming motives,
May give new principles.

Arc. It is my first,
My best ambition to relieve the wretched.
You wrong me, princess; you had best retire.

Phæ. No; Periander first shall hear my suit.
Here will I wait his coming; on the earth
Fall prostrate at his feet, implore his mercy,
Cling round his knees; and never loose my hold,
Till his heart melt, and save us from destruction.

Enter THESEUS.

The. What plaintive sorrow thro' the lonely palace
Alarms my list'ning ear?

Phæ. That well-known voice
Dispels my fears. O! Theseus, how my heart
Bounds at thy lov'd approach! and yet this day
Decides your doom.—Archon can tell you all.

This

This day resigns you to my father's power,
Here Periander has resolved to answer
Th' ambassador of Crete.
The. Controul thy fears,
Archon has serv'd me, and I thank him for it.
All will be well; the king protects us still.
Archon, the storm that threaten'd hideous ruin
At length subsides. The angry blast recalls
Its train of horrors. Through the sev'ring clouds
Faint gleams of day disclose the face of things.
The raging deep, that rose in mountain billows,
Sinks to repose: The winds, the waves are hush'd.
From yon high tower, that overhangs the bay,
I view'd the ocean round. No sail appears,
No vessel cleaves the deep, save one escap'd
From the wild uproar of the warring winds;
That with its shatter'd masts, and lab'ring oars,
Stems the rough tide, and enters now the harbour.
Phæ. Another sail! and enters now the harbour!
From whence? Who and what are they? From what coast?
Alas, from Crete! 'tis Minos sends; my father's wrath
Pursues us still; another embassy
Comes to demand us all,
And banish ev'ry fear.
Arc. Perhaps some vessel
Rich with the fruits, which busy commerce sends
From the adjacent isles, on Naxos' coast
Now seeks a shelter from the roaring deep—
I'll to the harbour. Theseus, be it thine
To pour o'er Phædra's woes the balm of comfort,
And hush her cares to peace. From Crete, I trust,
The messengers of woe no more will come,
To urge their stern demand. [*Exit*.
Phæ. Go, traitor, go:
Pernicious vile dissembler!
Thæ. Ah! forbear.
Phæ. He seems a friend, the surer to betray.
Full well he knows that Ariadne's charms
Have wak'd a flame in Periander's heart.

To that alliance with a ſtateſman's craft
He ſtands a foe conceal'd: He dreads to ſee
On Naxos' throne a queen from Minos ſprung,
And therefore plans our ruin.
"*The.* Yet thy fancy,
"Still arm'd againſt itſelf, turns pale and trembles
"At ſhadowy forms. Were thy ſuſpicions juſt,
"Wherefore reveal them? Why unguard thyſelf,
"And lay each ſecret open to your foe?
"With him, whoſe rankling malice works unſeen,
"While ſmiles becalm his looks, 'twere beſt pretend
"Not to perceive the lurking treachery—
"Reproof but goads him, and new whets his paſſions;
"Till what was policy becomes revenge—
"Detected villany can ne'er forgive.
"*Phæ.* And muſt I ſall in ſilence? muſt we periſh,
"Abandon'd by ourſelves, tame, willing victims;
"Nor let the murd'rer hear one dying groan?
"Muſt I behold him with his treach'rous arts,
"A lurking foe, nor pour my curſes on him;
"But poorly crouch, and thank him for the blow.
"Oh! love like mine, the love which you inſpired,
"That each day riſes ſtill to higher ardour;
"Think'ſt thou that love like mine will calmly ſee thee
"Giv'n up a victim to my father's rage?"
The. And think'ſt thou then that Archon is my foe?
Phæ. He is; I know him well; he means deſtruction.
Th' ambaſſador of Crete will ſoon have audience.
Archon concerted all. Oh! if my care
Could counteract his dark, his ſell designs,
Then were I bleſs'd indeed. When firſt you landed
A helpleſs victim on the Cretan ſhore,
Full well you know, ſoft pity touch'd my heart,
And ſoon, that tender pity chang'd to love.
I wiſh'd to ſave you: Ariadne's fortune
Gave her the clue that led you thro' the maze.
Her zeal out ran my ſpeed, but not my love.
And would my fate allow me now to ſave thee,

Then

Then by that tie ('tis all my ſiſter's claim)
I then ſhould prove me worthy of thy love.
The. Deem me not, gen'rous Phædra, deem me not.
Form'd of ſuch common clay, ſo dead to beauty,
As not to feel with tranſport at my heart
Thy powerful charms. To Ariadne
I owe my life. That boon demands reſpect,
Demands my gratitude: But love muſt ſpring
Spontaneous in the heart, its only ſource,
Unmix'd with other motives than its own;
Unbrib'd unbought—above all vulgar ties.
Phæ. And yet while ruin———
The. Check this ſtorm of paſſion,
Nor think, with abject fear that Periander
Will e'er reſign us. Ariadne's charms
Have touch'd his heart. " His words, his looks proclaim it.
" In the ſoft tumult all his ſoul is loſt,
" He dwells for ever on the lov'd idea,
" And with her beauty means to grace his throne.
" *Phæ.* Archon abhors the union: To prevent it,
" His deep deſigns—"
Hear what I ſhall diſcloſe,
And treaſure it in ſacred ſilence ſeal'd.
Laſt night admitted to a private audience,
Wrapt in the friendly mantle of the dark——

Enter an OFFICER.

The. What would'ſt thou? ſpeak thy purpoſe.
Of. At the harbour
That fronts the northern wave, a ſhip from Athens
This moment is arriv'd.
Phæ. Relief from Athens!
Of. Your preſence there by all is loudly call'd for.
The Say to my friends, I will attend them ſtraight.
[*Exit Officer.*

Phæ.

Phæ. A ray of hope to gild the cloud of woe.
The. Now, Phædra, mark me. Let thy fears subside.
Laſt night when ev'ry care was lull'd to reſt,
No eye to trace my ſteps, no conſcious ear
To catch the ſound, then Periander granted
A private conference: I unboſom'd to him,
In confidence, the ſecrets of my heart,
To Ariadne I reſign'd all claim;
Renounc'd each tender paſſion. Periander
No longer view'd me with a rival's eye.
He promis'd his protection. Ariadne
Has pow'rful charms, and the king bears a heart
To beauty not impaſſive. Joy and rapture
Spoke in his eye, and purpled o'er his face.
With vanity ſhe'll hear a monarch's ſighs,
Proud of her ſway. A diadem will quench
Her former flame, with glitt'ring ſplendor tempt her,
And make the infidelity her own.
Phæ. But if ſhe hears a ſiſter dares diſpute
A heart like thine————
The. Truſt to my prudent caution.
That dang'rous ſecret I have ſkreen'd with care.
Here it lies buried. Periander thinks
A former flame, kindled long ſince in Greece,
Preys on my heart with ſlow conſuming fires.
But hark—beware—this way ſome haſty ſtep.

Enter Archon.

Arc. The Greeks now iſſue on the beck. They bring
Tidings from Athens, and from every tongue
Your name reſounds, and rings along the ſhore.
The. Thy friendſhip knows no pauſe; each hour you bring
New ſuccour to the wretched. Princeſs, farewell.
Archon, I thank thee, and now ſeek my friends.
[*Exit.*
Arc. Princeſs, if once again I may preſume
To offer friendly counſel; from this place
'Twere beſt you now retire. Yon' eaſtern clouds
Bluſh

Blush with the orient day. My royal master,
Attentive ever to the cares of state,
Will soon be here.
Phæ. Let him first hear my pray'r;
Permit me here to see him. To the voice
Of misery his ear will not be clos'd.
[*A flourish of Trumpets.*

Enter PERIANDER, *and attendant Officers.*

Oh! Periander, 'midst the nations fam'd
For wisdom and for justice, let thy heart
Incline to mercy. Spare, oh, spare the wretched.
Perian. Rise, Princess, rise. That humble supplicant state
Suits not the dignity of Minos' daughter.
Whence this alarm, and why those gushing tears?
Phæ. We fled for refuge to you. Oh! protect,
Protect the innocent. You gave us shelter;
It was a godlike act; recal it not;
Yield us not victims to a father's wrath;
Nor by one barbarous action sully all
The glories of your reign. Save Ariadne,
Save Theseus too: our misery claims respect.
Perian. Save Ariadne! can that beauteous mourner
Suspect my promis'd faith? perhaps ev'n now,
Like some frail flow'r by beating rains oppress'd,
She pining droops, and sickens in despair
Oh! quickly seek her: with the words of comfort
Heal all her woes; raise that afflicted fair,
And bid the graces of her matchless form
Flourish secure beneath my soft'ring smile.
When Ariadne sues, a monarch's heart
Yields to her tears with transport.
Phæ. Men will praise
The gen'rous deed: the gods will bless thee for it.
[*Exit.*

Arc.

Arc. The Ambassador from Crete with Minos' orders
Attends your royal will.
Perian. He shall be heard.
[*He ascends his Throne.*

Enter ALETES.

Perian. To Naxos' court, Aletes, you are welcome.
You come commission'd from the Cretan king:
Now speak your embassy.
Al. In fairest terms
Of friendly greeting Minos, sir, by me
Imparts his rightful claim. He knows the justice,
The moderation that directs your counsels:
He knows, though oft' in the embattled field
Your sword has reek'd with blood, your wisdom still
Respects the rights of kings; respects the laws,
That hold the nations in the bonds of peace.
To you, sir, he appeals; he claims his daughters,
His rebel daughters, leagu'd against his crown:
He claims the victim from his vengeance rescued;
Rescued by fraud, by Ariadne's fraud;
And here at Naxos sheltered from his justice.
A sov'reign and a parent claims his rights.
You will respect the father and the king.
Perian. Of Minos' virtues, his renown in arms,
His plan of laws, that spread around the blessings
Of sacred order, and of social life;
Laws, which even kings obey, the world has heard
With praise, with gratitude. All must revere
The legislator, and the friend of man:
But in the sorrows that distract his house,
Is it for me with rash mistaken zeal
To interpose my care? is it for me
To judge his daughter's conduct? What decree,
What law of mine, what policy of Naxos

Have

Have they offended? All who roam the deep
Find in my ports a safe, a sure retreat.
Should I comply with your proud, bold request,
The hardy genius of this sea-girt isle
Would call it tyranny, and power usurp'd;
'Tis law, and not the sov'reign's will, that here
Controuls, directs, and animates the state.

Al The law that favours wrongs, and shelters guilt,
Subverts all order. Through her hundred cities
All Crete will mourn your answer. With regret
Minos will hear it. By pacific means
He would prevail; by justice, not the sword.
But, Sir, if justice, if a righteous cause
At your tribunal lift their voice in vain,
I see the gath'ring storm; I see the dangers
That hover round your isle, and o'er the scene
Humanity lets fall the natural tear.
The sons of Crete, a brave, a gen'rous race,
Active and ardent in their monarch's cause
Already grasp the sword. "I see the ocean
"White with unnumber'd sails; your coast, your harbours
"Beleaguer'd close. I see the martial bands
"Planting their banners on the well fought shore;
"Your hills, your plains glitt'ring with hostile arms,
"Your cities sack'd, your villages on fire,
"While from its source each river swoln with carnage
"Runs crimson to the main. I see the conqueror
"Urge to your capital with rapid march,
"And desolation cov'ring all the land.
"Still, Sir, you may prevent this waste of blood;
"Your timely wisdom———"

Perian. The scope appears
Of your fair seeming message. And does Minos,
Fam'd as he is in arms, say, does he hope
With proud imperious sway to lord it o'er
The Princes of the world? And does he mean
To write his laws in blood? And must the nations
Crouch at his nod? Must I upon my throne
Look pale and tremble, when your fancied Jove
Grasps the unlifted thunder? Tell your king

He

He knows my warlike name—knows we have met
In fields of death, oppos'd in adverſe ranks,
Braving each other's lance—he knows the ſinew,
With which this arm can wield the deathful blade,
Or ſend the miſſive javelin on the foe,
Thirſting for blood.—Go, bear my anſwer back,
And ſay beſides, that Naxos boaſts a race
Rough as their clime, by liberty inſpir'd,
Of ſtubborn nerve, and unſubmitting ſpirit,
Who laugh to ſcorn a foreign maſter's claim.
You've ſpoke your embaſſy, and have our anſwer.

Al. Unwilling I bear hence th' ungrateful tidings.
[*Exit.*

Perian. To-morrow's ſun ſhall ſee him ſpread his ſails:
He muſt not linger here.

Arc. Your pardon, Sir.
This anſwer may provoke the powers of Crete,
And war, inevitable war enſues.

Perian. Let the invader come, here we have war
To meet his braveſt troops.

Arc. But where the numbers
To man each port, and line the ſea-beat ſhore?
Within the realm ſhould the foe flush'd with conqueſt
Rear his proud banner———

Perian. With auxiliar aid
Greece will eſpouſe my cauſe. The fleets of Athens
Full ſoon ſhall cover the Ægean deep,
And with confederated bands repel
A tyrant's claim.

Arc. Each ſtate will urge its claim,
Minos demands his daughter: Greece expects
Her gallant warrior, and ev'n now aſſerts
To crown his love, the princeſs, as her own.
Let Theſeus ſpread his ſails, and ſteer for Greece,
With Ariadne, partner of his flight.
You gain that gen'rous ſtate: by ev'ry tie
Of honour bound, Athens unſheaths her ſword,
And haughty Minos threatens here in vain.

Perian. Yield Ariadne! yield that matchleſs beauty,
Where all the loves, where all the graces dwell!
No,

No, I will ſave her; will protect her here
From rude unhallow'd violence. Do thou
Haſte to the palace, where the princeſs dwel's;
Say to th' attendant train, ourſelf will come,
To tell the counſels which my heart has formed.

Arc. Ay, there it lies,—there lurks the ſecret wound,
Love ſtrikes the ſweet infection to his ſoul.
'Tis as I fear'd. [*Aſide.*]—Perhaps by mild remonſtrance
We may gain time, and by the ſpecious arts,
Of treaty and debate prevent the war.

Perian. You know my orders; ſee them ſtraight obeyed.

[*Exit* Arc

Perian. Yes, Ariadne, from the inclement ſtorms
Of thy rude fortune, it is fix'd to ſhield thee,
And ſoften all thy woes. Her father then,
When with her milder ray returning reaſon
Becalms his breaſt, ſhall thank the friend that held
His rage ſuſpended, and with joy ſhall hear
That Ariadne reigns the queen of Naxos;
Here rules with gentle ſway a willing people,
And with her virtues dignifies a throne. [*Exit*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter PERIANDER, *with Attendants.*

Perian. Let all with duty, with obſervance meet,
Wait on the princeſs: let the virgin train
With ſongs of rapture, and melodious airs
Try their beſt art; wake all the magic pow'r
Of harmony, to ſoothe that tender breaſt,
And with ſoft numbers lull each ſenſe of pain,
I have beheld her, gaz'd on ev'ry charm,
And Ariadne triumphs in my heart.

Enter ARCHON.

Arc. A meſſenger from Athens waits your pleaſure.
Perian. From Athens, ſay'ſt thou?
Arc. In the northern bay
His ſhip is moor'd. Theſeus attends the ſtranger;
And both now crave an audience.
Perian. In apt time.
Their meſſenger arrives: when war impends,
Tidings from Athens are right welcome to me:
They breathe new vigour. Let the Greek approach.

Enter THESEUS *and* PERITHOUS.

The. Forgive the tranſports of a heart that ſwells
Above all bounds, when I behold my friend,

My

My gallant, gen'rous friend, the brave Perithous!
It glads my soul, thus to present before you
A chief renown'd in arms, the best of men,
My other self, the partner of my toils,
And my best guide to glory.
Perian. To the virtues
Of the brave chief my ear is not a stranger,
You come from Athens?
Perit. Scarce two days have pass'd
Since thence I parted. Through the realms of Greece
Fame spread at large th' adventures of my friend,
With Ariadne's glory, and the deed,
The gen'rous deed, that snatch'd him from destruction;
How she conveyed him to this happy shore,
How he has been receiv'd and shelter'd here.
The men of Athens, sensibly alive
To each fine motive, each exalted purpose,
Have heard with gratitude. My feeble voice
Would but degrade the sentiments that burn
In ev'ry breast, with joy and rapture fir'd.
Warm with the best sensations of the heart,
They pour their thanks, the tribute of their praise.
Perian. The praise that's offer'd by the sons of Greece,
By that heroic, that enlighten'd race
Is the best meed fair virtue can receive.
Perit. That fair reward is yours: your worth demands it.
To my brave friend Athens next points her care.
" What crime is his? Did he imbrue his hands
" In young Androgeus' blood? Why should he fall
" To expiate the death of Minos' son?
" Against the innocent who makes reprisals,
" And on the blameless head lets fall the sword,
" Offers up victims to his fell revenge.
" 'Tis murder, and not justice.
" *Perian.* Righteous Heaven
" In th' hour of danger has watch'd o'er your friend,
" And he has triumph'd o'er their barb'rous rites,
" Their savage law, the stain of Minos' reign."

Perit. Exulting now ſhe pants for his return.
In crowds her eager citizens go forth,
And on the beach, and on the wave-worn cliff,
O'er all the main roll their deſiring eyes,
And aſk of ev'ry ſhip that ploughs the deep,
News of their hero. A whole people's voice
Choſe me their delegate, their faithful officer,
To ſeek my friend, and bears him hence with ſpeed
Back to his native land.
Perian. The laws of Naxos
To all are equal. None are here conſtrain'd
None forced by violence, or lawleſs pow'r,
To quit this ſafe, this hoſpitable ſhore.
Theſeus will uſe the rights of free-born men.
'Tis his to give the anſwer.
The. For this goodneſs
My heart o'erflows with more than words can ſpeak.
Perit. All Greece will thank you.— —Ariadne too——
Perian. How?—Ariadne, ſay ſt thou?
Perit. With delight,
With admiration, with unbounded tranſport,
Athens has heard her gen'rous exploits;
Has heard, when Theſeus on the Cretan ſhore
Arriv'd to glut their vengeance, how the tear
Bedew'd her cheek. She pitied his misfortunes,
And whom ſhe ſnatch'd from death, ſhe means to bleſs
With that rare beauty, and connubial love.
Perian. Ha! do'ſt thou come to ſink me to a ſlave?
'Tis pride, 'tis arrogance makes this demand.
Muſt I obey the proud imperious mandate?
Bear Ariadne with you!—By yon' Heaven,
No pow'r on earth ſhall force her from the iſle.——
" If thou preſum'ſt again———
" *Perit.* I never have,
" I never can preſume———
" *Perian.* 'Tis inſolence!—
" Is this the praiſe? Are theſe the thanks you bring?
" Urge that requeſt no more.——"

Perit.

Perit. If to my words
You'll deign to lend a favourable ear——
" *Perian.* Say, on what law does Athens found a right
" To claim an alien princess?
" *Perit.* When her choice,
" Her gen'rous choice, the impulse of the heart,
" Inclines her will, you will not fetter freedom?"
Perian. Her father claims her:—dost thou vainly hope,
That Greece can silence his paternal rights?
Is that your errand?—Who commission'd thee?—
Is Theseus your adviser? and does he
Second this proud attempt?
The. No, Theseus never
Will plan, or counsel what may stain your honour.
Perit. Nor will he e'er forget,—I know him well—
I know his gratitude, his gen'rous warmth,
His constancy and truth—He'll ne'er forget
His vows of faithful love. The debt he owes
To Ariadne never can be paid.
Athens approves their union; tuneful bards
Prepare the tribute of immortal verse,
And white-rob'd virgins even now are ready,
Where e'er she treads, to scatter at her feet
The blooming spring, and at the sacred altar
To hymn the bridal song.
The. Unthinking man!
This blind mistaken zeal will ruin all. [*Aside.*
Perian. No more! I'll hear no more!—here break we off.
Proud Greek, forbear, nor wound again my ear,
With terms of vile disgrace. Another word
Of yielding Ariadne, and by Heaven
The claims of Minos——His ambassador
Is here at hand; once more I'll give him audience.
And if again this outrage to my crown,——
If Theseus is found tamp'ring in your plot,——
If you presume, by subtlety and fraud,
[*To* Theseus.

To mock my hopes, and after last night's conference,
Renounce your honour, my resentment rous'd
May do a deed to whelm you all in ruin;
Then, let your friend, when next he dares approach us,
Learn to respect a monarch, who disdains
A proud demand from the vain states of Greece.
[*Exit.*

Perit. The states of Greece, proud monarch! be assur'd,
Will vindicate their rights——Ha!—why that look
Of wild dismay? that countenance of sorrow?
Explain;—what means my friend?

The. Alas! you know not,
You little know the horror and despair
In which the hand of fate has plung'd my soul.

"*Perit.* And can despair oppress thee? can thy heart
"Know that pale inmate? By our dangers past,
"By all our wars, spite of this braggart king,
"The beauteous Ariadne shall be thine.

"*The.* No more; no more of that:—I cannot speak—"

Perit. Those falt'ring accents, and those lab'ring sighs
Import some strange alarm.

"*The.* Oh! lead me hence,
"To meet the fiercest monsters of the desart,
"Rather than bear this conflict of the mind!

"*Perit.* Unfold this mystery."—Those downcast eyes——

The. You have awaken'd Periander's fury.
Thy words have led me to a precipice,
And I stand trembling on the giddy brink.

Perit. From thence I'll lead thee to the peaceful vale,
To life and happiness.——And can you thus,
When all your country's wishes bless your name,
When Athens to promote your happiness——

The.

The. They may mis-judge my happineſs :—Alas!
I thank them :—little do they know of Theſeus.
Perit. They know your virtues, your heroic ardour,
Your patriot toil in the great cauſe of Greece:
They know that honour in your breaſt has fix'd
Her ſacred ſhrine: They know the gen'rous flame
That love has wak'd in Ariadne's breaſt,
And how, in gratitude, the bright idea
Muſt fire a ſoul like thine.———
The. Too deep, too deep
" Each accent pierces here. [*Aſide.*
" *Perit.* Thoſe faithful arms
" Shall ſoon receive her."
The. You ſhould not have claim'd her.
Perit. Not claim that excellence! that rareſt beauty———
The. By that miſtaken claim you've rais'd a ſtorm
" That ſoon may burſt in ruin on my head.
" You've fir'd to madneſs Periander's ſoul,
" And wounded me, here in the tend'reſt nerve,
" That twines about the heart. For Ariadne"
Thy ſuit is vain, 'tis fruitleſs: urge no more.
Let me embark for Greece; gain my diſmiſſion;
But for the princeſs, name her not: her liberty
The heart of Periander ne'er will grant:
No words that e'er were form'd will wring it from him.
Perit. Not grant her freedom! not releaſe her hence!
Should he refuſe, all Greece will riſe in arms:
One common cauſe will form the gen'rous league.
Soon Periander ſhall behold the ocean
White with the foam of twenty thouſand ſhips;
The Grecian phalanx poſted on his hills,
And his defenceleſs iſland wrapt in flames.
The. Let Greece forget me, nor in ſuch a cauſe
Unchain the fury of wide-waſting war.
Oh! not for me ſuch ſlaughter.
Perit. Think'ſt thou Greece
Will ſee thee torn from Ariadne's arms?

From her who sacrific'd her all for thee?
From her whose courage has brav'd ev'ry danger;
Fled from her country, from her father's court,
To save her hero's life? From her, whose beauty
Already is the praise of wond'ring Greece,
Surpassing all that lavish fancy forms.
I know the princess; the revolving year
Has not yet clos'd its round, since I beheld her
The pride, the glory of the Cretan dames.
" That harmony of shape, that winning grace;
" And when she moves, that dignity of mien!
" Those eyes, whose quick and inexpressive glance
" Brightens each feature, while it speaks the soul."

The. Thou need'st not, oh! my friend, thou need'st not point
Her beauties to my heart,—Each charm is her's,
Softness and dignity in union sweet,
And each exalted virtue. Nature form'd her
The hero's wonder, and the poet's theme.

Perit. You shall not lose her, by yon' Heaven you shall not.
I'll seek the king; apprise him of his danger,
Unmoor my ship, remeasure back the deep,
And bring the fleets of Athens to this harbour.

The. It must not be; no, Periander's soul
" Is firm, heroic, unsubdu'd by danger.
" His sudden rage, his irritated pride
" Will seal my doom: The deputies from Crete
" Are here to claim their victim: Periander sees
" Each charm, each grace of Ariadne's form,
" And sends his rival hence to instant death."

" *Perit.* I can prevent him; can elude his malice,
" This very night, when all is wrapt in darkness,
" Embark with me. The partner of your heart
" Shall be our lovely freight. I'll bear her hence
" Far from the tyrant's pow'r. I'll lead you both
" To Athens' happy realm, the growing school
" Of laurell'd science, and each lib'ral art,
" Of laws, and polish'd life, where both may shine
" The pride, the lustre of a wond'ring world,

" Dear

" Dear to each other, and to after times
" The pattern of all truth and faithful love."
The. Wretch that I am!—his ev'ry word presents
My inward self, the horrors of my guilt. [*Aside.*
Perit. Theseus,—that altered look,—those sighs renew'd!
Some hoarded grief,———
The. Enquire no more but leave me.
Perit. I cannot, will not leave thee: tell me all.
Some load of secret grief weighs on thy spirit.
The. There let it lodge, there swell, and burst my heart.
Perit. You terrify your friend: Why heaves that groan?
Why those round drops, just starting from thy eye,
Which manhood combating forbids to fall?
The. I see my guilt.
Perit. Your guilt!
The. I feel it all.
Perit. If there is aught that labours in thy breast—
The. Here, here it lies.
Perit. To me unbosom all.
The. Perithous, would'st thou think it?—Oh! my friend,
I owe to Ariadne more,—alas! much more
Than a whole life of gratitude can pay.
And yet——
Perit. Go on: unload thy inmost thoughts;
A friend may heal the wound.
The. Oh! no; thou'lt scorn me.
Abjure, detest, abhor me.—Wilt thou pardon
The frailties of a heart, that drives me on,
Endears the crime, and yet upbraids me still?
In me thou seest—who can controul his love?
In me thou seest——
Perit. Speak; what?
The. A perjur'd villain!
The veriest traitor, that e'er yet deceiv'd
A kind, a generous, a deluded maid;
And for his life preserv'd, for boundless love,
Can only answer with dissembling looks,

With

With counterfeited ſmiles, with fruitleſs thanks;
While with reſiſtleſs charms another beauty—
Perit. Another! gracious pow'rs!
The. She kindles all
The paſſions of my ſoul; charms ev'ry ſenſe,
And Phædra reigns the ſov'reign of my heart.
Perit. Her ſiſter Phædra!—" and does ſhe aſpire
" To guilty joys; Does ſhe admit your love?"
Does ſhe too join you in the impious league?
Will ſhe thus wound a ſiſter, and receive
A traitor, a deſerter to her arms?
The. On me, on me let fall thy bitt'reſt cenſure,
But blame her not.
Perit. Not blame her!—Who can hear
A tale like this, and not condemn you both?
Th' ungen'rous act will tarniſh all your fame.
The. Forbear, my friend; the god of love inſpir'd——
Perit. Some fiend, a foe to ev'ry generous inſtinct,
A foe to all that 's fain, or great in man,
Infus'd the baleful poiſon through your ſoul.
The. The guilt is mine: But ſpare, oh! ſpare my Phædra,
A ſingle glance from thoſe love-beaming eyes
Inflames each thought, and hurries me to madneſs.
Hark! [*Soft muſic is heard*] Ariadne comes!—this way, my friend;
Thou ſtill canſt ſerve me. With a lover's ardour
The King beholds her, and with earneſt ſuit
He wooes her to his throne. Let us retire;
Thou ſtill canſt guide me through the maze of fate.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE II.

Soft Music is heard. Enter ARIADNE, *with a train of* Virgins.

" *1ſt. Vir.* Now, Ariadne, now, my royal miſtreſs,
" Propitious fortune ſmiles, and from this day
" The gods prepare a ſmiling train of years."
Ari. I thank you, Virgins; this kind of ſympathy
Shows you have hearts that feel another's bliſs.
" Oh! much I thank you, virgins; yet this day
" Diſpels the clouds, that hover'd o'er my head."
Thou ſource of life, thou bright, thou radiant god,
Who through creation pour'ſt thy flood of glory,
All hail thy golden orb! " Thou com'ſt to quell
" The howling blaſt, to bid the tempeſt ceaſe,
" And after all the horrors of the night,
" To cheer the face of nature!—Oh! to me
" Thou com'ſt propitious, in thy bright career
" Leading thy feſtive train. The circling hours
" That ſmile with happier omens, as they paſs
" Shedding down bleſſings from their balmy wings,
" Prepare thy way rejoicing; with thee come
" Bright hope, and roſe-lip'd Health, and pure delight,
" And love and joy, the ſunſhine of the ſoul."
" *1ſt. Vir.* Be all your hours like this: may no misfortune
" O'ercloud the ſcene; and may you ne'er have cauſe
" To dim the luſtre of thoſe eyes in tears."
Ari. Oh, from this day! From this auſpicious day,
Theſeus is mine; " The godlike hero's mine,
" With ev'ry grace, with ev'ry laurel crown'd,
" The lover's ſoftneſs, and the warrior's fire.
" A monarch now protects him; he has pledg'd
" His Royal word—But O, my love!"

Swift

Swift as ſome God, that mounts the viewleſs winds,
And cleaves the liquid air, thou ſhould'ſt have flown
To tell me all, to bleſs me with thy preſence,
And bid the news more joyful touch my ear,
Rais'd and endear'd by that enchanting tongue.
" Why does he loiter thus ?"
" *1ſt. Virg.* His friends from Greece
" Perhaps detain him."
" *Ari.* " Oh ! it muſt be ſo,
" And without cauſe I chide his ling'ring ſtay.
" A ſhip from Greece to claim us! mighty gods!
" When your diſpleaſure ſmote me, when your wrath,
" Severely juſt, gave to my trembling lip
" The cup of bitterneſs, to your high will
" I bow'd in reverence down ; I bore it all,
" For Theſeus' ſake, I bore it all with patience ;
" And 'mid'ſt our ſorrows, with a dawn of gladneſs
" I ſooth'd his wounded ſpirit ; teach me now,
" Oh! teach me how to bear this tide of joy,
" Nor with exceſs of bounty try too much
" A heart that melts, that languiſhes with love."

Enter PHAEDRA.

Ari. Oh! Phædra, why this long, unkind delay ?
The gods reſtore my Theſeus to my arms.
Phæ. If the protecting gods from Theſeus' head
Ward off th' impending blow, none more than Phædra
Will feel the gen'ral joy. But ſtill my fears———
Ari. Suppreſs them all. Theſeus has nought to fear.
But where, where is he ? whither has he wander'd ?
Say, tell me all, and ſpeak to me of Theſeus.
In vain I aſk it. " Though his name delights
" My liſt'ning ear, yet you will never charm me
" With

"With the lov'd praiſes of the godlike man."
On Periander's name you often dwell,
In ſtrains, that in a heart not touch'd like mine,
Might ſtir affection.—Not a word of Theſeus:
Why ſilent thus?—it is unkind reſerve.
Alas, my ſiſter, thy unruffled temper
Knows not the tender luxury of love,
That joys to hear the object it adores
Approv'd, admir'd of all, when ev'ry tongue
Grows laviſh in his praiſe, then, then, with ecſtacy
The heart runs over and with pride we liſten.

Phæ. I have been juſt to Theſeus; never wrong'd him,
His fame in arms has fill'd the nations round;
And purple victory in fields of death
For him has often turn'd the doubtful ſcale.

Ari. Unkind, ungen'rous praiſe! Has no one told you
His brave exploits? the number of his battles?
But who can count them? Fame exalts her trump,
Delighted with his name to ſwell the note;
And victory exulting claps her wings,
Still proud to follow, where he leads the way.

Phæ. So fame reports.—With what unbounded rage
Her paſſions kindle.—She alarms my fears. [*Aſide.*

Ari. Why that averted look? Of late, my ſiſter,
Of late I've mark'd thee with dejected mien,
Penſive and ſad.—If aught of diſcontent
Weighs on thy heart, diſcloſe it all to me.
"In ev'ry ſtate of life, in all conditions,"
With thee I have unloaded ev'ry ſecret,
Fled to your arms, and ſigh'd forth all my care.

Phæ. Does Ariadne think my love abated?

Ari. No, Phædra, no; I harbour no miſtruſt.
I know thy virtues:—We grew up together,
Knit in the bands of love. No op'ning grace
That ſparkled in thy eye, or dawn'd in mine,
Could prompt the little paſſions of our ſex.
We heard each other's praiſe, and envy ſlept.

And ſure had Theſeus, though with boundleſs ardour
I now muſt love him, to diſtraction love him;
Yet if my Theſeus had firſt fix'd on thee,
I could, I think I could, have ſeen you happy
In his loved arms, and hero as he is
I had reſign'd him to you.—Why that ſigh,
Phædra? why fall thoſe tears?

Phæ. Forgive your ſiſter,
If ſtill ſhe fears for thee—Her ev'ry look,
Each word ſhe utters pierces to my heart. [*Aſide.*

Ari. Speak, tell me why is this? why thus alarm me?
I never had a thought conceal'd from thee.

Enter THESEUS *and* PERITHOUS.

Ari. Oh! Theſeus, in thy abſence ev'ry moment
Was counted with a ſigh. "Support me, help me;
"For I am faint with bliſs."

The. Revive, revive;
"Recall thy fleeting ſtrength, your counſels, Phædra,
"Will beſt aſſiſt her, your perſuaſive voice
"Will charm her ſenſe, and baniſh all her cares.

"*Phæ.* At his lov'd ſight, what new emotions riſe!"
[*Aſide.*

The. My friend Perithous from the realms of Greece———

Ari. Perithous here! the meſſenger from Athens!
When laſt you ſojourn'd at my father's court;
(The ſun has circled ſince his annual round)
I well remember you, admir'd of all,
Men heard and praiſed the wonder of your friendſhip
"For Theſeus, then a ſtranger to thoſe eyes,
"But ſince beheld, and ah! beheld to charm
"The heart of Ariadne!—you come now
"To ſuccour our diſtreſs."

Perit.

Perit. In evil hour
I ſail'd from Greece. Would I had ne'er embark'd.
Ari. My heart dies in me.——Say what new event———
Theſeus explain, and tell me, tell me all.
The. Oh! I was born to be th' unceaſing curſe
Of Ariadne's life; ſtill, ſtill indebted,
Unable to repay.
Ari. Thou generous man!
To hear thoſe ſounds, and view thee thus before me,
O'er pays me now for all my ſufferings paſt.

Enter ARCHON.

Arc. Theſeus, on matters of ſome new concern,
To me unknown, your preſence is required.
Tis Periander's order.
The. I obey.
Ari. What may this mean? yet Theſeus, ere you go—
The. My friend will tell each circumſtance; from him
You'll calmly hear it all. And may his voice,
Soft as the breeze that pants in eaſtern groves
Approach your ear, and ſoothe your thoughts to peace.
[*Exit with* Archon.
Ari. The gods will watch thy ways, and Periander
Has promis'd ſtill to ſhield thy ſuffering virtue.
Phæ. I dread ſome miſchief: Ariadne, here
Wait my return: I'll follow to the palace,
And bring the earlieſt tidings of his fate. [*Exit.*
Ari. My heart is chill'd with fear. What dark event—
Can Periander—no; diſhonour never

Will ſtain his name.—And yet that awful pauſe!
Thoſe looks with grief o'erwhelm'd!

Perit. Yes, grief indeed
Sits heavy at my heart.—

Ari. Reveal the cauſe;
Give me to know the worſt. This dread ſuſpenſe—

Perit. Oh! that in ſilence I could ever hide
From you, from all, and in oblivion bury
What here is lodg'd, and ſhakes my ſoul with horror!

Ari. With horror! wherefore? is not Theſeus ſafe?
Does not his country claim him? Does not Greece
With open arms expect him? Does not Athens
Send you with orders to demand us both?

Perit From thence your dangers riſe: the ſons of Athens,
A quick, inconſtant, fluctuating race—

Ari. Yet ever wiſe, heroic, gen'rous, brave,
All ſoul, all energy. Do they oppoſe
Our nuptial union? Do they ſtill retain
Their old hoſtility? Do they exclude
An alien princeſs from the throne of Athens?
If ſuch their will, take, take the ſov'reign ſway,
Th' imperial diadem, the pomp of ſtate:
Let Theſeus to his father's rights ſucceed,
And reign alone; make me his wedded wife;
'Tis all I aſk: "the Gods can grant no more."
Thrones, ſceptres, grandeur! love can ſcorn all.

Perit. Unhappy Theſeus! by diſaſtrous fate
Doom'd to betray ſuch excellence; to ſee
The faireſt gift of Heaven, and ſpurn it from him.
[*Aſide.*

Ari. You anſwer not: ſpeak and reſolve my doubts.
Pity a heart, too tenderly alive,
And wild with fear, that throbs, that aches like mine.
Thy pure, exalted mind will tower above

The

The arts of mean equivocating phrase.
You'll not deceive a fond, a faithful woman.
Perit. None should deceive you; none. You will forgive
My hesitating fears. I would not wound
That tender frame with aught that may alarm you.
For thee my mind misgives: the fear that awes me
Pays homage to your virtue.
Ari. And does Greece
Reject the love I proffer?
Perit. No, all Greece
Reveres your honour'd name: Th' Athenian state
By me demands your liberty. In terms
Of earnest import I have urg'd their claim;
But Periander,—to his ardent spirit
You are no stranger.—He no sooner heard
The name of Ariadne, than with fiercest rage—
Perhaps you know the cause—with high disdain
He spurn'd at the demand. Some hidden motive—
'Tis love perhaps—you will forgive my boldness—
'Tis love, perhaps, that prompts the stern reply.
Should I presume once more to urge the claim,
Theseus that moment must embark for Crete.
So says the king: he will not brook a rival.
You'll see your lover torn by ruffians from you;
You'll see the ship bound swiftly o'er the waves;
In vain you'll shriek; in vain extend your arms,
And call on Theseus lost!
Ari. That savage purpose
The soul of Periander will disdain.
Perit. What will not love persuade? love made you fly
Your father's court; and love may teach a monarch
To break all bonds, and tow'r above the laws.
Ari. If this be what alarms you———
Perit. Theseus' life
Once more depends on thee.———
Ari. To save that life
Is there an enterprise, a scene of danger,
That Ariadne will not dare to meet?

Perit. Your wond'rous daring on the wings of fame
Has reached the nations round. But now, alas!
One only way is left.
Ari. Direct me to it.
Perit. To Periander lend a gracious ear.
For thee he sighs; for thee his vows ascend.
His throne awaits thee; the imperial crown——
Ari. Sir, do you know me?
" *Perit.* Princess here to reign
" In this fair island——
" *Ari.* Do you know the spirit
" That rules this breast, and still informs my soul?"
Perit. Forgive the zeal that prompts me to this office.
The king intensely loves; and in a base,
Degenerate world, from which all truth is fled,
He still may faithful prove to worth like thine.
Consult with Theseus: he can best advise you.
Ari. Consult with Theseus! ask his kind consent,
That I may prove a traitress to my vows!
Resign my Theseus!
With ev'ry grace, with ev'ry laurel crown'd,
The lover's softness, and the warrior's fire.——
Sir, for this counsel, for this gen'rous care,
Accept my thanks.——" You are too much alarm'd—
" Resign my Theseus!—Oh, the gods have form'd him
" With ev'ry virtue that adorns the hero!
" With valour, to incite the soldier's wonder;
" With ev'ry grace to charm the heart of woman.
" Oh! none will rival him. 'Twill be the pride
" Of Periander, 'tis his highest glory,
" That Theseus fled for shelter to his throne,
" And met protection here."

Perit

Perit. I've been to blame.
Perhaps I urge too far:—Princeſs, farewell!
May the benignant gods watch all your ways.
[*Exit.*

Ari. Your fears are vain; each gloomy cloud ſhall vaniſh,
Or, ting'd with orient beams of ſmiling fortune,
With added luſtre gild our various day;
While o'er our heads Hymen ſhall wave his torch,
Sooth all our cares, and brightens every joy.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter ARIADNE *and* THESEUS.

Ari. Oh, look not thus! "those eyes that glare so pale,"
Those sighs that heave as they would burst your heart,
Affright my soul, and kill me with despair.
Oh! banish all thy doubts, and let those eyes
Smile, as when first they beam'd their softness on me.
The. Alas! I'm doom'd to mourn; my thread of life
"Was steep'd in tears, and must for ever run
"Black and discolour'd with the worst of woes.
Ari. Can thy great heart thus shrink, appall'd with fear?
"Theseus, I never saw thee thus before."
The. Our days of rapture and of promis'd joy
Far hence are fled.
"*Ari.* No, on their rosy wings
"The hours of joy and ever new delight
"Come smiling on. Is this a time for fear,
"When all is gay serenity around us,
"And fortune opens all her brightest scenes?
"*The.* Too soon that scene, with low'ring clouds deform'd,
"Will show the sad reverse." You little know
How Periander with resistless fury

Breaks

Breaks through all bonds. His passions scorn restraint.
And what he wills, his vehemence of soul
Pursues with fierce, with unremitting ardour.
To his wild fury all must yield obedience.

Ari. His reign has ever been both mild and just.
Fair virtue, like some god that rules the storm,
Still calms the warring elements within him;
And moderation with her golden curb
Guides all his actions.

The. Yet there is an impulse,
Which with the whirlwind's unresisted rage,
Roots up each virtue, and lays waste the soul.
Love reigns a lawless tyrant in his heart.
For thee he sighs; and sure that matchless beauty
May well inflame the passions of a prince,
Who with a diadem can deck thy brow.

Ari. Too well he knows the ties that bind us both.
Knows you're all truth, all constancy and love.
He knows the flame my virgin sighs have own'd;
Knows that for thee I left my native land,
Fled from my friends, and from my father's palace,
And gave up all for thee. And thinks he now
His throne, his diadem, his purple pomp,
Have charms of power to lure me from thy arms?
He knows his vows are lost in air: Thy heart
Is Ariadne's throne.

The. "His fiercest passions
"Break forth at once, like the deep cavern'd fire.
"All ties, all tender motives must give way,
"His resolution's fix'd" Alas! this very day,
Unless for ever I renounce thy love,
His jealous rage sends me hence bound in chains,
To die a victim on the Cretan shore.

Ari. He will not dare it; no, so black an outrage
His heart will ne'er conceive. Should he persist,
Should malice goad him on, I too can fly
This barb'rous shore; with unextinguish'd love

Through

Through every region, every clime attend thee;
Follow your fortunes, if the fates ordain it,
Ev'n to my father's court; there proſtrate fall,
And claſp his hand, and bathe it with my tears,
Nor ceaſe with vehemence of grief to melt him,
Till he releaſe thee to theſe circling arms,
" Approve my choice, and ſhow thee to the people,
" The adopted heir, the riſing ſun of Crete."
The. By yielding me, his rival is deſtroy'd;
And by that act his proud ambition hopes
To ſooth your father's irritated pride,
And mould him to his wiſh.
Ari. Can Periander
Harbour that black intent? " and does he mean
" To prove at firſt a villain and a murderer,
" And then aſpire to Ariadne's love?"
No, Theſeus, no; he will not ſtoop ſo vilely:
I've heard you oft' commend him; oft' my ſiſter
Employs whole hours with rapture in his praiſe.
He is her conſtant theme. Her partial voice
Ev'n above thine exalts his fav'rite name.
" She dwells on each particular; in peace
" His milder virtues, his great fame in arms:
" How, when he talks, fond admiration liſtens:
" And each bright princeſs hears him, and adores.
" *The.* Not envy's ſelf, howe'er his pride inflam'd
" May deal with me, can overſhade his glory.
" Renown in war is his; the ſofter virtues
" Of mild humanity adorn his name.
" The poliſh'd arts of peace, and every muſe
" Attune to finer ſentiments his ſoul.
" His throne is fix'd upon the firmeſt baſis
" Of wiſdom, and of juſtice. There to ſhine
" The partner of his heart, his ſoft aſſociate
" In that bright ſcene of glory, well may prompt
" In ev'ry neighbouring ſtate the virgin's ſigh,
" And wake the ambition of each monarch's daughter.
" *Ari.* The ſtrain, the rapture that to me in ſecret
" My ſiſter Phædra pours the live-long day,

" Enamour'd

" Enamour'd of his name! Perchance you've heard her,
" And mark'd the heaving sigh, and seen the blush
" That glow'd with conscious crimson on her cheek."
" Oh! if she cherishes the tender flame,
" With maiden coyness veil'd, and pines in love,"
Beauty like her's may fire a monarch's heart,
And Periander, without shame or guilt,
Without a crime, may woe her to his arms.
To see her happy, to behold my Phædra,
Crown'd with a monarch's and a people's love,
Would be the pride of Ariadne's heart.

The. Oh, it were misery, the worst of woes.
[*Aside.*

Ari. Why do you start? why that averted look?
If you approve their nuptials, freely tell me:
With Periander I can plead her cause,
Paint forth each charm of that accomplish'd mind,
" 'Till the king glow with rapture at the sound."

The. Oh, this would plunge me in the worst despair! [*Aside.*
It must not be!——Has not Perithous told you——

Ari. Perithous is your friend.—Perhaps to draw
The tie still closer, you would see him bless'd
In Phædra's arms.—Tell me your inmost thoughts.
If such your will, what will I not attempt
To sooth to dear delight a mind like thine?
Phædra will listen to me; mutual love
Has so endear'd us, from our tend'rest years
" Has so encreas'd, and with our growth kept pace,"
That we have had one wish, one heart, one mind—
My voice with Phædra will have all the power
Of soft persuasion: her exalted merit
Will bless your friend and brighten all his days.

The. Oh, the bare image fires my brain to madness!
[*Aside.*
Alas! this dream of happiness——

Ari. What means
That sudden cloud? and why that lab'ring sigh?

Oh,

Oh, let my sister to Perithous' vows
Yield her consent, and bless him with her beauty:
Together then we'll seek the realms of Greece;
There in sweet union see our growing loves
Spring with new rapture, share each other's bliss,
And by imparting multiply our joys.

Enter ARCHON.

Arc. With thee, fair princess, Periander craves
Another interview: He enters now
The palace garden.
Ari. Does he there require
My presence?
Arc. Where you deign to give him audience,
He will attend you.
The. "It were best go forth."
His virtues claim respect; and Oh, remember
My fate, my happiness on thee depend.
Ari. Trust Ariadne, trust your fate with me.
[*Aside.*
Arc. The Cretan princess, with resistless passion
Inflames his fierce desires. My boding fears
Foresee some dire event.
The. A glance from her
Will sooth his rage, and all may still be well.
When love resistless fires the noble mind,
Th' effects, though sudden, from that gen'rous source,
Are oft' excus'd; the errors of our nature,
The tender weakness of the human heart.
Arc. Errors that influence the public weal,
His rank prohibits.—"Let his vices be
"(If vices he must have) obscure and private,
"Unfelt by men, leaving no trace behind.
"It were unjust, that his unbounded fury
"Should tear thee from the arms of her you love."

The.

The. " But when a monarch"——Ha! Perithous comes.

Enter PERITHOUS.

Perit. Theſeus, I ſought thee.—Archon, does your king
Relent? or muſt confed'rate Greece ſend forth
Her fleets and armies to ſupport her rights?
Arc. The miſeries of war my feeble voice
Shall labour to prevent. Theſeus, farewell,
Archon is ſtill your friend. With Ariadne,
Ere long, I truſt, you may reviſit Greece. [*Exit.*
The. With her reviſit Greece! Why all this zeal
For Ariadne? Who has tamper'd with him?
Why not convey her to her father's court?
Why not invite her to the throne of Naxos?
Why all this buſy, this officious care
To torture me? to foil his ſovereign's love?
To ſend far hence the idol of his heart,
And blend her fate with mine?
Perit. Her fate with thine
So cloſe is blended, nothing can divide them.
Truth, honour, juſtice, gratitude combine
Each tender ſentiment; they form a chain,
An adamantine chain, indiſſoluble, firm,
And ſtrong as that which from the throne of Jove
Hangs down to draw to harmony and union
This univerſal frame.
The. Is this my friend?
Perit. Your friend, who ſcorns to flatter;
Who dares avow th' emotions of his heart.
Oh! Theſeus, we have long together walked
The paths of virtue, upright, firm in honour;
And ſhall we now decline? and ſhall we now
With fraud, with perfidy, with blackeſt perfidy,
For ever damn our names?

" *The.* This ſtern reproof
" Is not the language the time now demands.
" 'Tis thine, my friend, to ſoften my diſtreſs;
" To pour the balm of comfort o'er my ſorrows,
" And ſooth the anguiſh of a wounded mind.
" Oh! ſtep between me and the keen reproaches
" Of injur'd beauty; ſave me from myſelf;
" From Ariadne ſave me!
" *Perit.* Is it thus,
" Oh! raſh deluded man!" and is it thus
With high diſdain you ſpurn that rareſt beauty,
That fond, believing, unſuſpecting fair?
" *The.* Have you not painted to her dazzled fancy
" The ſplendor of a throne, that here awaits her?
" *Perit.* So generous, ſo unbounded is her love,
" She ſeeks but thee, thee only. Pomp and ſplendor
" Are toys that ſink, and fade away before her.
" *The.* Then tell her all the truth: tell her at once,
" Another flame is kindled in my heart,
" And fate ordains ſhe never can be mine.
" *Perit.* Will that become Perithous? that the taſk
" Thy friendſhip would impoſe? Muſt I proclaim
" To th' aſtoniſhed world, my friend's diſhonour?
" Muſt I with cruelty, with felon purpoſe,
" Approach that excellence, that beauteous form,
" And for her gen'rous love, for all her virtue,
" Fix in her tender breaſt the ſharpeſt pang,
" With which ingratitude can ſtab the heart?"
The. Why wilt thou goad me thus? 'tis cruelty;
'Tis malice in diſguiſe.—Forbear, forbear;
Aſſiſt your friend in the ſoft cauſe of love,
Involuntary love, that hold's enſlaved
The fetter'd will.
Perit. Involuntary love!
Beware, beware of the deceitful garb
That vice too oft' aſſumes.—There's not a purpoſe
Prompt-

Prompting to evil deeds, that dares appear
In its own native form. The first approach,
With bland allurements, with insidious mien,
Wears the delusive 'semblance of some virtue.
The Siren spreads her charms, and fancy lends
Her thousand hues to deck the lurking crime.
Opinion changes; 'tis no longer guilt;
'Tis amiable weakness, generous frailty,
Involuntary error. On we rush
By fatal error led, and thus the language,
The sophistry of vice deludes us all.

The. Perithous, 'tis in vain: in vain you strive,
By subtle maxims, and by pedant reasoning
To talk down love, and mould it to your will.
It rages here like a close pent-up fire;
And think'st thou tame advice can check its course,
And soothe to rest the fever of the soul?

Perit. And wilt thou thus, by one ungen'rous deed,
Blast all thy laurels, and give up at once
To shame and infamy thy honour'd name?

The. Woul'dst thou destroy my peace of mind for ever!

Perit. I would preserve it. Would'st thou still enjoy
Th' attesting suffrage of the conscious heart?
The road is plain and level: live with honour.
Be all your deeds, such as become a man:
'Tis that alone can give th' unclouded spirit,
The pure serenity of inward peace.
All else is noisy fame; the giddy shout
Of gazing multitudes, that soon expires,
And leaves our laurels, and our martial glory
To wither and decay. By after times
The roar of fond applause no more is heard,
The triumph ceases, and the hero then
Fades to the eye: the faithless man remains.

The. Was it for this you spread your sails from Greece?
To aggravate my sorrows?—If a monarch
Woes Ariadne to his throne and bed;

If I resign her to imperial splendor,
Where is my guilt? Why will she not accept
The bright reward, that waits to crown her virtues?

Perit. Because, like thee, she is not prone to change.

The. Why, cruel, why thus pierce my very soul?

Perit. Because, like thee, she knows not to betray.

The. Disastrous fate! And would'st thou have me fly
From Phædra's arms? By every solemn vow,
By every sacred tie, by love itself,
My heart is her's. She is my only source
Of present bliss, my best, my only earnest
Of future joy; the idol of my soul.
Should I desert her, can invention find,
'Midst all her stores, a tint of specious colouring
To varnish the deceit?

Perit. It wants no varnish,
No specious colouring. Plain honest truth
Will justify the deed. With open firmness
Go, talk with Phædra: tell her with remorse
Conscience has shown the horrors of your guilt,
Tell her the vows, you breathe to Ariadne,
Were heard above, recorded by the gods,
Tell her if still she spreads her fatal lure,
She takes a perjur'd traitor to her arms,
Practis'd in fraud, who may again deceive,
Tell her, with equal guilt, nor less abhorr'd,
She joins to rob a sister of her rights,
Tell her that Greece——

The. No more; I'll hear no more.
Assist my love; 'tis there I ask your aid,
Forget my fame; it is not worth my care.

Perit. Then, go, rush on, devoted to destruction.
Let Hymen kindle his unhallow'd torch,
Clasp'd in each other arms enjoy your guilt,
Renounce all sacred honour; add your name
To the bright list of those illustrious worthies,

Who

Who have ſeduced, by vile inſidious arts,
The fond affections of the gen'rous fair;
And in return for all her wondrous goodneſs,
Leave the fair mourner to deplore her fate;
To pine in ſolitude, and die at length
Of the ſlow pangs that rend the broken heart.

The. Oh! fortune, fortune!—wherefore was I born
With a great heart, that loves, that honours virtue,
And yet thus fated to be paſſion's ſlave?

Perit. 'Tis but one effort, and you tower above
The little frailties that debaſe your nature.
That were true victory, worth all your conqueſts,
You triumph o'er yourſelf. And lo! behold
Th' occaſion offers——Ariadne comes!

The. I muſt not ſee her now.

Perit. By heaven, you ſhall!

The. Off, looſe your hold. Confuſion, ſhame, and horror,
Rage and deſpair, diſtract and rend my ſoul.
'Tis you have fixed theſe ſcorpions in my breaſt.

Perit. And yet—— [*holding him.*

The. No more; let midnight darkneſs hide me
In ſome deep cave, where I may dwell with madneſs,
Far from the world, far from a friend like thee.
[*Exit.*

Perit. Miſguided man! my friendſhip ſtill ſhall save him.

Ari. Stay, Theſeus, ſtay: does he avoid my preſence?
Why with that haſte, that wild diſorder'd look—

Perit. 'Tis now the moment of ſuſpended fate:
The gods aſſembled hold th' uplifted balance,
And my friend's peace, all that is dear, or ſacred,
His fame and honour,——

Ari. The gods protect him ſtill: you need not fear.
All danger flies before him.

Perit. While the king
Detains him here, he knows to what exceſs
A monarch's love——

Ari. Does that alarm his fear?
And does he therefore fly?—Ungen'rous Theſeus!
And is it thus you judge of Ariadne?
And yet, Perithous, I will not upbraid him.
His tender ſenſibility of heart
Too quickly takes th' alarm: yet that alarm
Shows with what ſtrong ſolicitude he loves;
My tears prevail, and he may ſail for Greece.
This very moment Periander granted———
See, where he comes: he will confirm it all.
Perit. It were not fit he ſhould behold me here.
When apt occaſion ſerves, we'll meet again.
A heart like your's, with every virtue fraught,
Should be no more deceiv'd. I now withdraw. [*Exit.*
Ari. Go tell my Theſeus all his fears are vain.
In love, as well as war, he ſtill muſt triumph.

Enter PERIANDER.

Perian. If once again I trouble your retreat,
Deem me not, princeſs, too importunate,
Nor with indignant ſcorn reject a heart,
That throbs in every vein for you alone.
Ari. Scorn in your preſence, ſir, no mind can feel.
Far other ſentiments your martial glory,
And the mild feelings of your gen'rous nature,
Excite in every breaſt. The crown you wear,
From virtue's pureſt ray derives its luſtre.
Your ſubjects own a father in their king.
"Beneath your ſway the wretched ever find
"A ſure retreat. At Periander's court
"All hearts rejoice: here mis'ry dries her tear."
To me your kind humanity has given
Its beſt protection. "For the gen'rous act
"My heart o'erflows: theſe tears atteſt my thanks."
Each day beholds me bow to you with praiſe,
Reſpect, and gratitude.
Perian. And muſt reſpect;
Fruitleſs reſpect, and diſtant cold regard,
Be all my lot? Has Heaven no other bliſs
In ſtore for me? unhappy royalty!
Condemn'd to ſhine in ſolitary ſtate,

With

With no fond tenderneſs of mutual love,
To ſooth the heart, and ſweeten all its cares
" Without the ſoft ſociety of love."
Ari. For thee the gods reſerve ſublimer joys,
" The happineſs ſupreme of ſerving millions."
'Tis your's, in war to guard a people's rights;
In peace, to ſpread one common bliſs to all,
And feel the raptures of that beſt ambition.
" Mankind demands you: glory is your call."
Perian. Ambition is the phrenzy of the ſoul;
The fierce inſatiate avarice of glory,
That wades through blood, and marks its way with ruin:
And when its toils are o'er, what then remains,
But to look back through wide diſpeopled realms?
Where nature mourns o'er all the dreary waſte,
And hears the widows', and the orphans' ſhrieks,
And ſees each laurel wither at the groans,
And the deep curſes of a ruin'd people.
Vain efforts all! vain the purſuit of glory,
Unleſs bright beauty arm us for the field,
Hail our return, enhance the victor's prize,
And love reward what love itſelf inſpir'd.
" *Ari.* The vaſt renown, that ſpread ſuch luſtre round you,
" Like the bright ſun, that dims all meaner rays,
" And makes a deſert in the blue expanſe,
" Will never want uplifted wondering eyes
" To gaze upon it." From the neighb'ring ſtates
Some blooming virgin, ſome illuſtrious princeſs
Will yield with rapture to a monarch's love,
Proud of a throne, which virtue has adorn'd.
Perian. That pow'r is your's: one kind indulgent glance,
One ſmile, the harbinger of ſoft conſent,
Has bliſs in ſtore beyond the reach of fortune,
Beyond ambition's wiſh.
Ari. Your pardon, ſir,
I muſt not hear you ſigh, and ſigh in vain.
Look round your iſle, where in its faireſt forms,

In

In all its winning graces, beauty decks
Your ſplendid court. Amidſt the radiant train,
If none has touch'd your heart, may I preſume—
Perhaps you'll think mine a too partial voice—
If none attract you, ſee where Phædra ſhines
In every grace, in each attractive charm
Of outward form, and dignity of mind,
Her rare perfections, her unequall'd virtue,
" The mild affections of her gen'rous heart,"
Her friendſhip firm, in ev'ry inſtance tried,
Tranſcend all praiſe. " In her pure virgin breaſt
" Love never kindled yet his ſecret flame.
" Your voice may wake deſires unfelt before;"
With pride ſhe'll liſten, and may crown your vows
With all th' endearments of a love ſincere,
And with her ſofter luſtre grace your throne.

Perian. Why, cruel, torture me with cold diſdain?
With thee to reign were Periander's glory.

Ari. Oh, not for me that glory! well you know
This heart already is another's right.

Perian. There lies the precipice on which you tread.
By your own hand 'tis cover'd o'er with flow'rs:
Your fall will firſt diſcover it.

Ari. Thoſe words
Dark and myſterious———

" *Perian.* It were not fit
" That fond credulity ſhould lead you on,
" In gay deluſion, and in errors maze."—
The baſe deceiver———

Ari. Who?—what doſt thou mean?

" *Perian.* I mean to ſave you from his treach'rous arts;
" To place you on a throne, beyond his reach,
" Where foul ingratitude will ſee her ſhafts
" Fall pow'rleſs at your feet.

Ari. Cold tremors ſhoot,——
" I know not why,——through all my trembling frame."——

Perian.

Perian. Tender, ſincere, and generous yourſelf,
You little know the arts of faithleſs man.
Ari. Explain; unfold;—you freeze my ſoul with horror,
Perian. Beware of Theſeus!
Ari. How! of Theſeus, ſaid'ſt thou?
Perian. Were I this day to ſend him hence a victim,
(And you alone—your tears ſuſpend my purpoſe)
'Twere vengeance due to perfidy like his.
Ari. The viper-tongue of ſlander wrongs him, Sir.
Too well I know his worth:—my heart's at peace.
Perian. With ſond enchantment the gay ſiren hope
Has lur'd you, on a calm unruffled ſea,
To truſt a ſmiling ſky and flatt'ring gales,
Too ſoon you'll ſee that ſky deform'd with clouds;
Too ſoon you'll wonder at the gath'ring ſtorm,
And look aghaſt at the deep lurking ruin,
Where all your hopes muſt periſh.
Ari. Still each word
Is wrapt in darkneſs:—end this dread ſuſpenſe,
Or elſe my flutt'ring ſoul will ſoon forſake me,
And leave me at your feet a breathleſs corſe.
Perian. A former flame——reſtrain that wild ſurpriſe;
Summon your ſtrength:—I ſpeak his very words:
A former flame, kindled long ſince in Greece,
"Preys on his heart with ſlow conſuming fires."
Ari. Does this become a monarch? Can your pride
Thus lowly ſtoop, thus with a tale ſuborn'd
To tempt the honour of this faithful breaſt?
Perian. By ev'ry pow'r that views the heart of man,
And dictates moral thoughts, 'tis truth I utter.
Laſt night, admitted to a private audience,

He

He own'd it all; renounc'd your love for ever;
Gave up his fair pretenſions.—Ariadne,
Your colour changes, and the guſhing tear
Starts from your trembling eye.——

Ari. The very thought——
Though ſure it cannot be,—the very thought
Strikes to my heart like the cold hand of death.

Perian. If ſtill you doubt, go charge him with his guilt:
He will allow it all.

Ari. And if he does,
Oh, what a change in one diſaſtrous day!

Perian. Your fate now calls for firm deciſive meaſures.
I will no longer urge th' ungrateful ſubject.
I leave you to collect your flutt'ring ſpirits.
I would not ſee your gen'rous heart deceived—
His guilt ſhould rouſe your nobleſt indignation.
Now you may prove the greatneſs of your ſoul.

[*Exit.*

Ari. "If this be ſo,—if Theſeus can be falſe,
"Is there on earth a wretch ſo curs'd as I am?"—
A former flame!—ha! think no more—that thought,
With ruin big, ſhoots horror to my brain.
A former flame "ſtill rages in his ſoul.—
"So ſaid the king."—Who is the fatal fair?
"Where, in what region does ſhe hide her charms?"
Was it for her I ſav'd him from deſtruction?
For her rebell'd againſt my father's power?
To give to her all that my heart adores?
Can Theſeus thus!—no, "yonder ſun will ſooner
"Start from his orbit."—Yet wherefore ſhun my preſence?
Why all this day that ſtern, averted look?
I'm torn, diſtracted, tortur'd with theſe doubts;
And where, Oh, where to fix!—I think him ſtill
All truth, all honour, tenderneſs and love.
And yet Perithous——it is all too plain;

All

All things conſpire; all things inform againſt him.
" He will avow it!"—Let me ſeek him ſtraight,
Unload my breaſt, and charge him with my wrongs;
With indignation harrow up his ſoul;
Tell all I've heard, all that diſtracts my brain;
Pour forth my rage, pour forth my fondneſs too,
And perhaps prove him innocent at laſt. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter ARIADNE.

" *Ari.* Where, Ariadne, where are now the hours
" That, wing'd with rapture, chas'd each other's flight,
" In one gay round of joy ?—Where now the hopes,
" That promis'd years of unextinguiſh'd love ?"—
" 'Tis paſt ;—the dream is fled ;—" the ſun grows dim ;
" Fair day-light turns to darkneſs ;"——all within me
Is deſolation, horror, and deſpair.——
And are his vows, breath'd in the face of heav'n,
" Are all his oaths at once diſpers'd in air ?"
Thoſe eyes, whoſe glance ſent forth the melting ſoul,
Were they too falſe ?—" The tears, with which he oft'
" Bedew'd his boſom, were they taught to feign ?
" He ſhuns me ſtill: where does he lurk conceal'd ?"—
In all our haunts, in each frequented grove,
(Ah ! groves too conſcious of the traitor's vows !)
In vain I've ſought him.—Does this hated rival,
Has ſhe ſeduc'd him to her am'rous parley ?
Gods ! does ſhe ſee him ſmile, and hear that voice ?
And does he ſigh, and languiſh at her feet,
Enamour'd gaze, and twine thoſe arms around her ?
" Hold, traitor, hold ; the gods forbid your love :—
" Thoſe looks, thoſe ſmiles are mine !——Deluded maid !
" Mine are thoſe vows, that fond embrace is mine."
Horror !

Horror! diſtraction!—Still 'tis but ſurmiſe
That with theſe ſhadowings makes me tremble thus,
I ſtill may wrong him:—Periander's fraud———
"'Tis he abuſes my too credulous ear.
"The tale may be ſuborn'd:—I'll not believe it—
"Loſt Ariadne! you believe too much.
"Where, where is Phædra? her unwearied friendſhip
"May ſtill avert my ruin: ſhe may find
"The barbarous man, and melt his heart to pity.
"And yet ſhe comes not."—Ha! Perithous here!—
He knows the work:—he can pronounce my doom.

Enter PERITHOUS.

Perit. Forgive me, princeſs, with officious zeal
If I once more intrude. The time no longer
Admits of wav'ring, heſitating doubt.
The king, enfetter'd in the chains of love,
Rejects the claims of Greece. If hence you part,
You muſt, with Theſeus, ſteer your courſe for Crete,
His reſolution's fix'd.
Ari. Does Theſeus know
Th' impending danger?—have you ſeen your friend?
Perit. His great heart labours with a war of paſſions
Too big for utterance. In the ſoldier's eye
The ſilent tear ſtood trembling. Strong emotions
Convuls'd his frame. He knows your ev'ry virtue,
And rails in grief, in bitterneſs of ſoul,
At his hard fate, and each malignant planet,
That leaves him empty praiſe, and fruitleſs thanks,
The only ſad return he now can make.
Ari. Thanks! unavailing thanks!—You need not come
To add to miſery this ſharpeſt pang.
Love in this breaſt is not a vulgar flame,

The mere compliance of a will resign'd;
'Tis gen'rous ecstacy, 'tis boundless ardour.
A heart, that feels like mine, will not be paid
With cold acknowledgments, and fruitless thanks;
Mere gratitude is perfidy in love.

" *Perit.* Your bright perfections were his fav'rite theme.
" He sees your days, that shone serenely bright,
" Discolour'd now with sorrows not your own.
" He sees you following, with unwearied steps,
" One on whom fortune has not yet exhausted
" Her stores of malice;——whom the gods abandon.——

" *Ari.* Whom justice, truth, and honour all abandon!"

Perit. It grieves him, Ariadne, much it grieves him,
To see thee overwhelm'd in his misfortunes:
Condemn'd with him to drain the bitter cup
Of endless woe; and since propitious fortune
With better omens courts you here at Naxos,
Tis now his with, that you renounce for ever
A man accurst, sad outcast from his country,
The fatal cause of all your sorrow past.

" *Ari.* The fatal cause of all my woes to come!

" *Perit.* I do not mean to justify his guilt.
" Might I advise you, you may still be happy."
A monarch lays his sceptre at your feet.
Your father Minos will approve your choice;
All Naxos will consent; a willing people
With fond acclaim will hail you as their queen,
And Theseus never can betray you more.

Ari. And dost thou think, say, does the traitor think
Thus to ensnare me with insidious counsels?
Last night admitted to a private audience,
To Periander he confess'd his guilt.
Another passion rages in his heart.
You know it all: unfold your lurking thoughts,
Reveal the truth; give me the tale of horror,
Own the black treason, and consummate all.

" *Perit.*

" *Perit.* Would I could hide the failings of my friend. [*Aside.*

" *Ari.* Those broken accents but distract me more.

" Let ruin come; I am prepar'd to meet it.——

" Oh, speak! pronounce my doom!—In me you see

" A wretched princess, a deluded maid,—

" Lost to her friends, her country, and her father.—

" In pity tell me all: with gen'rous frankness

" Deal with the wretched; let me know the worst."

Perit. Far be deceit from me: of just resentment
I would light up the flame: my friend is plung'd,
Beyond all depth, in treachery and guilt.
Another love shoots poison to his soul.
At length he owns it. He avows his passion.

Ari. Avows his passion!

" *Perit.* 'Tis his fatal crime.

" *Ari.* You hear it, gods!—I ask no patience of you:

" Lend me no fortitude, no strength to bear

" This horrible deception."—If your justice, gods,
From your bright mansions views this scene of guilt,
Why sleeps your thunder?—" Send me instant madness,

" To rase at once all traces from my brain,

" All recollection of a world like this,

" All busy memory of ungrateful man."

Perit. Assert yourself; revenge your injur'd rights,
And tow'r above the false, the base deserter,
Who breaks all vows, and triumphs in his guilt.

Ari. Can fraud like this engender in his heart?
It cannot be; no,—the earth does not groan
With such a monster!—You traduce him, sir,
Who form'd the black design? Who forg'd the tale?—
'Tis Periander's art:—'twas he suborn'd you.

Perit. If you will hear me——

Ari. Trouble me no more:
Theseus shall hear how his friend blasts his fame,

And comes from Athens with his high commiſſion,
To tempt my faith, and work a woman's ruin.
[*Exit.*

Perit. Too generous princeſs! my heart inward bleeds
To ſee the cruel deſtiny that waits thee,
"Ruin, inevitable ruin falls
"On her, on Theſeus, and his blaſted fame."
And yet if Phædra—would ſome gracious pow'r
Inſpire my voice, and give the energy
To wake, to melt, to penetrate the heart.——
What if I ſeek her?—Ha!——

Enter PHÆDRA.

Phæ. Methought the ſound
Of Ariadne's voice———
Perit. 'Tis as I wiſh'd:
Her timely preſence——— [*Aſide.*
Phæ. Went my ſiſter hence?
Perit. Yes, hence ſhe went, wild as the tempeſt's rage,
As if a conflagration of the ſoul
To madneſs fir'd her brain. But Oh! I fear
She went to brood in ſecret o'er her wrongs;
To think, and to be deeper plung'd in woe.
Phæ. You chill my heart with fear: you have not told her
For whom in ſecret Theſeus breathes his vows;
For whom he cheriſhes the hidden flame.
Perit. There wants but that—that circumſtance of horror,
To deſolate her ſoul with inſtant madneſs.
Phæ. Yet why ſtill obſtinate, why thus diſdain
A monarch's vows? A mind like hers, elate
With native dignity, and fierce with pride,

May

May view with ſcorn the lover who betrays her,
And on th' imperial throne revenge her wrongs.
Perit. Revenge is the delight of vulgar ſouls,
Unfit to rule the breaſt of Ariadne.
Phæ. Your words, your looks alarm me: from your eye
Why ſhoots that fiery glance?—What muſt we do?
Perit. What muſt we do?—The honeſt heart will tell thee,
"'Tis in your pow'r:—renounce your guilty loves;"
Do juſtice to a ſiſter; ſcorn by fraud,
By treach'rous arts to undermine her peace;
Reſtore the lover whom you raviſh'd from her,
A lover all her own, by ev'ry tie,
By ſolemn vows her own, nor join in guilt
To wreſt him from her, for the ſelfiſh pride,
The little triumph o'er a ſiſter's charms.
Phæ. To Ariadne turn: give her your counſel.—
She ſtill, if timely wiſe, may ſave herſelf,
For joy and rapture:—ſhe may live and reign.—
If I loſe Theſeus, I can only die.
Perit. Better to die, than live in vile diſhonour.
You ruſh on ſure deſtruction:—awful conſcience,
That ſits in judgment in each human heart,
And, from that dread tribunal ſpeaks within us—
Conſcience will tell you, you have broke all faith,
Betray'd all confidence, deſtroy'd the bonds
Of ſacred friendſhip, and with ſhame and infamy
Ruin'd a ſiſter, who would die to ſerve you.
Phæ. Inhuman that thou art! why wound me thus
With ſtern reproach?—why arm againſt my peace,
With ſcorpion whips, theſe furies of the ſoul?
Perit. For this wilt thou invade a ſiſter's rights?
For this betray her? to endure for ever
The ſelf-accuſing witneſs of the heart!
Remorſe will be your portion: ſhame and anguiſh
Will haunt your nights, and render all your days
Unbleſt and comfortleſs.
Phæ. It is too much,
Too much to bear this agony of mind.

Perit. 'Tis virtue ſpeaks; it warns you:—hear its voice,
And, ere too deeply you are plung'd in guilt,
Return with honour, and regain the ſhore.

Phæ. No more;—'tis too much:—I cannot bear it.

Perit. Greece honours Ariadne:—Think when Theſeus
Returns with glory ſtain'd, with foul diſhonour,
Think of the black reverſe. Will men receive
With ſongs of triumph, and with ſhouts of joy,
Him and his fugitive?—I ſee you're mov'd:—
Thoſe tears are ſymptoms of returning virtue.

Phæ. You've turn'd my eyes with horror on myſelf.—
Oh! thou haſt conquer'd:—Ariadne, take,
Take back your lover; I reſign him to you.
No, Phædra will not live the ſlave of vice;
"I will not bear this torture of the mind,
"Goaded by guilt, pale, trembling at itſelf."

Perit. There ſpoke the gen'rous ſoul:—to thoſe emotions
May the gods give the energy of virtue.

Phæ. Go, ſay to Theſeus, for his love I thank him;—
Bid him renounce, forget me——Can he do it?—
Bid him preſerve his honour, and his life——
You need not counſel him—He will not fall
A willing victim for a wretch like me.
Yet, if his heart conſents, let him forget
His vows, his plighted faith; and as he once,
With unfelt ardour, could delude my ſiſter,
Bid him once more diſſemble, and betray.

Perit Oh, bleſt event! All danger will retreat——
I leave you now, while nature ſtirs within you,
I leave you to th' emotions of your heart.

[*Exit.*

Phæ.

Phæ. Oh, what a depth of ſorrow and remorſe,
Of ſhame and infamy have I eſcap'd!——
Juſt gods! to you I bend: your warning voice
Has taught me to renounce all guilty joys,
And dwell, fair virtue!—dwell in peace with the!

Enter THESEUS.

The. Phædra, what mean thoſe tears?—Upon the wing
Of ſtrong impatience I have ſought your preſence.—
What new alarm———
Phæ. My ſoul is full of horror.——
Renounce my love;—forget me;—think no more
Of raſhly plighted vows.
The. Renounce thee, Phædra!———
Phæ. Fly my diſaſtrous love:—Diſgrace and ruin
Are all the portion Phædra has to give.
The. Is that my Phædra's voice?—Can ſhe talk thus?
The tyrant fair, who firſt inſpir'd my heart
With love unfelt before?—I ſtruggled long
To ſtifle in my breaſt the hidden flame;
I fled your preſence;—wherefoe'er I fled
Your image follow'd, and I ſtill lov'd on.
In vain I ſtruggled: your diſcerning eye,
What could eſcape?—You fann'd the riſing flame,
And ſoon my flutt'ring heart was wholly thine.
Phæ. Call not to memory the fond delight.
My guilt ſtands forth to view; I own it all.
The. And were the graces of each winning ſmile
Meant only to deceive me? Were thoſe eyes
Inſtructed how to roll the hidden glance,
To fool me with a mockery of hope,
Then ſpurn me from your arms a wretch deſpis'd?

Phæ.

Phæ. I must not, will not hear; the gods forbid it.—
I see my sister pale, deform'd with murder,
And hear the curses of mankind condemn me.—
Your friend has told me all.
The. Perithous?
Phæ. He.
The. Is he too join'd? is he too leagu'd against me?
Phæ. It was his friendship spoke.
The. Then send me hence,
A victim to appease your father's rage,
To be a spectacle for public view,
And meet at length an ignominious death.
Phæ. Heart-breaking sounds! [*Aside.*
The. Or if, ungenerous fair,
If you will have it so, command me hence,
Once more to sigh at Ariadne's feet,
And to that beauty——Phædra, have a care;—
That lovely form the wond'ring eyes of men
Adore, and even envy must admire.
Beauty like her's may twine about my heart,
And gain, though much I've struggled to resist her,
And gain at length my fond consent to wed her.
Phæ. Consent to wed her!——Death is in the thought!——
Perfidious traitor!—practis'd in deceit!—
And can another—after all your oaths——
Oh, light inconstant man!—Ah! can a rival
Blot out all fond remembrance of your love,
And twine her fatal charms about your heart?——
Consent to wed her!—Go,—abandon Phædra;
Seek Ariadne; To her matchless beauty
Breathe all your vows—those you can well dissemble;—
Go, melt in tears—those too you well can feign;—
Revel in joys your heart will never taste,
And see me laid a victim at your feet!

The.

The. Restrain this frantic rage, does this become
The tender moment, when the faithful Theseus,
With all a lover's ardour, comes to greet thee?
Phæ. The thought of losing thee turns wild my brain.
Oh, love resumes his empire o'er my soul!
And all inferior motives yield at once.
These tears can witness———
The. 'Tis no time for tears.
Go seek your sister: your soft prayers and tears
May still prevail. If not, to morrow's dawn,
Tell her, shall end her doubts, ere that, I've plann'd
Measures, that may make sure our mutual bliss!
To Periander I must now repair.
His messengers have sought me. Oh, remember,
My life, my hope of bliss, must spring from thee.
[*Exit.*
Phæ. And on his fate my happiness is grafted.
Ha! Ariadne comes!—Oh, love! what virtues
You force me to betray!—That haggard mien—
Those looks proclaim the tumult of her soul.

Enter ARIADNE.

Ari. [*Not perceiving* Phæ.] In vain I struggle to deceive myself:
I am betray'd, abandon'd, lost for ever.
" *Phæ.* How her fierce rage shoots lightning from her eyes! [*Aside.*
" *Ari.* Oh, while his accents charm'd my list'ning ear,
" While each fond look ensnar'd my captive heart,
" Ev'n then another lur'd the wand'rer from me!
" Another's beauty taught those eyes to languish;
" Another's beauty tun'd his voice to love!
Phæ. Appease her anger, gods, and grant her patience! [*Aside.*"

Ari.

Ari. And must I live to see her haughty triumph?
" To bear her scorn?—to bear the insulting pity
" Of Cretan dames!——all pleased with my undoing?"
To die at length in misery of heart,
And leave to after-times a theme of woe,
A tragic story for the bards of Greece?
Phæ How my heart shrinks!—I dread the interview. [*Aside.*
Ari. " Let lightning blast me first:"—Let whirlwinds seize me,
" To atoms dash me on the craggy cliff,"
And blow me hence " upon the warring winds"
To climes unknown, beyond the verge of nature,
" To the remotest planet in the void;
" That never, never can approach this world;
" But rolling onward, farther, farther still
" Holds in the wilds of space its fated round;"—
There I may rave, and to the list'ning waste
Pour forth my sorrows; " think 'till reason leaves me;
" And tell to other stars, and other suns,
" A tale to hold them in their course suspended,
" And turn them pale with horror at the sound.—
" There let me dwell;" grow savage with my wrongs,
And never hear from this vile globe again.
Phæ. Yet be of comfort.
Ari. There is no comfort for me.——
Whence is that voice?—Oh, Phædra! Oh, my sister!
" Assist me, help me—I am sick at heart.
" *Phæ.* Recall your reason, summon all your strength,
" Nor thus afflict yourself.
" *Ari.* Have I not cause?"
The barbarous man! he flies me; he abjures me;
Breaks all the fervent vows which each day's sun,
Which every conscious planet of the night,
Which every god bent down from heaven to hear.

Phæ.

Phæ. And yet, if calmly you will hear a sister——
" *Ari.* Could you suspect that perfidy like this
" Can lie close ambush'd in the heart of man?
" *Phæ.* But still, if Theseus, harrass'd out with woes,
" Pursued by fate, and bending to misfortune——
" *Ari.* I gave up all for him.
" *Phæ.* Were you but calm——"
Ari. Can the wretch tortur'd on the rack be calm?
Ingratitude, thou source of evil deeds!
Foe to the world's repose!—" thou canst with fair,
" With specious words, with treacherous disguise,
" Deceive the friend, and thrive upon his smiles;
" By servile arts enrich thee with his spoils,
" 'Till pamper'd to the full, with favours bloated,
" Thy hour is come to show thy native hue,
" And carry pain and anguish to the breast
" That warm'd and cherish'd thee." Detested fiend!
By thee truth fades even from the noblest mind;
Of fair, and good, and just, no trace remains;
Honour expires, the generous purpose dies,
And every virtue withers in the soul.
Phæ. Yet be advis'd, and you may still be happy,
A youthful monarch woes you to his throne.
The gods have sent relief——
Ari. Oh, Phædra! Oh, my sister!
As yet a stranger to man's wily arts,
You keep the even tenor of your mind:
You know not what it is to love like me.
Phæ. Oh, conscious, conscious guilt. [*Aside.*
Ari. " I see you pity me,"
It grieves me to afflict your tender nature.
In all his hours of tenderness and love——
Oh, charming hours, that must return no more!——
I never deem'd it was illusion all,—
Never suspected a more happy rival,—
Saw not her image lurking in his heart.
" Tell me her name: Who is she? Let me see
" The fatal fair, that poisons all my joys.

" Your

"Your own heart, Phædra, muſt condemn the deed."

Phæ. Her words too deeply pierce; they rend my ſoul! [*Aſide.*

Ari. "You can detect the traitreſs; guide me to her."

Tell me her name: Who is ſhe? Let me ſee
The fatal fair, that poiſons all my joys.
If on this iſle——Ha!—why that ſudden pauſe?
That downcaſt eye?—why does your colour change?
Go, now I ſee you know her!—in your looks
I read it all.

Phæ. Confuſion, ſhame, diſtraction!——
[*Aſide.*
If this wild fury that deforms your reaſon———

Ari. Phædra, beware: if you deceive your ſiſter,
If you conceal this rival, 'twere a deed
To ſhock all nature; to make heaven and earth,
And men and gods abhor thee.

Phæ. Since unjuſtly
You thus ſuſpect me—have I given you cauſe?

Ari. Diſcloſe it all and league not with my foes.

Phæ. I ſee my fault:—with too officious care
I came to heal your ſorrows.—I forbear:
I've been to blame; but now, farewell, farewell!

Ari. Stay, Phædra, ſtay: you ſhall not leave me thus.
In all afflictions you are ſtill my comfort.

Phæ. Then check this fury; it is phrenzy all.
Where is the pride becoming Minos' daughter?
Diſdain the traitor; drive him from your thoughts.
Turn where the gods invite you: Periander
Wiſhes to lay his ſceptre at your feet.
Your ſway ſhall bleſs the land, and humbled Theſeus
Will be reduc'd to ſue to you for mercy.
The power will then be your's, the envied power
Of godlike clemency: 'twill then be yours
To ſhow thee worthy of imperial ſway,
To ſhelter ſtill the man you once could love;
Know him inſenſible to worth like thine,
To honour loſt, and yet forgive him all.

Ari.

Ari. Must I transfer th' affections of my soul
To justify his perfidy? Must I
Bargain away my heart, to save a traitor?
For the fair Greek to save him? Mighty gods!
He shall not wed her!—Give her to my rage.—
I'll follow to the altar; there my vengeance——
How my heart shrinks—no, strike—" my blood recoils—
" Assist me, Phædra, give the means of death."
She shall not live to revel in his arms.
Then Theseus shall behold her faded form,
" And every drop the traitor then lets fall,"
Shall pay me for the tears, the galling tears,
His perfidy has cost me: then he'll know
The agony of soul, the mortal pang,
When we are robb'd of all the heart adores.
" *Phæ.* Ha! will you, sister, stain your hand in blood?
" *Ari.* Then Theseus too—he clings about my heart;—
" No, let him sail for Crete; my father's justice
" Will claim atonement for a daughter's wrongs,
" Doom him a sacrifice for broken vows,
" A dreadful warning to ungrateful man."

Enter PERITHOUS.

Perit. Your woes encrease each hour. A guard ev'n now
Leads Theseus forth, by Periander's order,
To yonder tower that overhangs the bay.
From hence, ere morn he must depart for Crete.
Phæ. Ah! there to perish—Ariadne, haste,
Seek Periander,—fly—prevent the stroke,
Ari. " He can no more deceive me."
Let the barbarian perish—no,
No more of tenderness—the gen'rous deed
But gives to fell ingratitude the pow'r
With scorpion stings to pierce you to the heart.

Phæ. Will you, then,
Ah, will you, cruel, ſee him doom'd to die?
I'll ſeek the king, and bathe his feet with tears,
And rave, and ſhriek, till he releaſe him to me.
[*Exit.*

" *Perit.* If he muſt fall, 'tis you have fix'd his doom,
" You ſtill can ſave him. At one glance from you
" The king will feel his reſolution melt.

" *Ari.* I ſav'd him once, and he requites me for it.
" No more of tenderneſs. The gen'rous deed
" But gives to fell ingratitude the pow'r
" With ſcorpion ſtings to pierce you to the heart.

" *Perit.* Yet, Ariadne, think——

" *Ari.* No more, but leave me. [*Exit* Perit.
" Yes, let the traitor die:—if he muſt die,
" In ſome dark cave I can deplore his fate,
" Hid from the world, forgetting all but him,
" 'Till the kind hand of death ſhall lay me ſtretch'd,
" In cold oblivion on the flinty ground,
" Pale, wan, and ſenſeleſs as the marble form
" That lies in ſorrow on ſome virgin's tomb!—
" He will not ſee my tears: the barbarous man
" Will be no more ungrateful.—Mighty gods!
" I lov'd, I am betray'd—yet love him ſtill.——
" Quick let me hence:—one gen'rous effort more
" May ſtill— fond wiſhes, how you ruſh upon me!—
" Should he relent,—Oh, ſhould returning love
" Once more——vain hope!—yet the deluſion charms me:—
" One gen'rous effort more may make him mine."
[*Exit.*

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter ALETES, *followed by an* OFFICER.

Al. Juſtice prevails, and Theſeus is my priſoner;
Yon' tow'r immures him cloſe. Seek thou the harbour,
Unmoor the ſhip; let all things be prepar'd
To give the ſpreading canvaſs to the wind.
The day declines, and the moon's ſilver beam
Plays on the trembling wave. This night 'tis fixed
Theſeus with me ſhall ſeek the Cretan ſhore.
[*Exit Officer.*

Enter ARIADNE.

Ari. Where is your priſoner?
Al. In yon' tow'r ſecur'd.
Ari. Your policy has fail'd; releaſe him ſtraight:
'Tis the king's order; you may read it, ſir. [*Gives him a Paper.*
Al. Your intereſt has prevail'd, and I obey.
[*Exit.*
Ari. Ye fond ideas, ye fierce warring paſſions,
With what a mingled ſway you drive me on!
Grief, rage, and indignation riſe by turns;
But love flows in, and reſolution dies.

Ha! ſee he comes—Oh! how this flutt'ring tumult,
With hopes and fears alternate, ſhakes my frame.

Enter THESEUS.

Ari. [*viewing him as he advances*] Diſſimulation fails him, and his looks
No longer hide the characters of guilt.
The. How ſhall I pour my thanks? a thouſand ſentiments
All preſs at once, and yet deny me utterance.
Words are too poor: expreſſion ſtrives in vain.
Ari. You need no more diſſemble—ſir, I've heard
" Periander
" Has heard the purpoſe of your ſoul. Laſt night,
" When ſleep ſeal'd ev'ry eye, in darkneſs wrapt,
" Thro' ſecret ways, clandeſtine as your thoughts,
" You ſtole into his preſence; there diſclos'd"
Your hidden flame, your alienated heart.——[*turns from him.*
The. Spare your reproaches, princeſs; Oh! forbear,
Forbear in pity to afflict a mind
Too deeply wounded! that feels all its errors,
Feels all your virtues, and with keeneſt ſenſe
Aches at its own reflections.
Ari. Of the pardon
Which Periander to my pray'rs has granted,
You know not the extent. To-morrow's ſun
Shall light you to your nuptials; you may then
Shew to the world this unapparent beauty,
And give to her the vows that once were mine.
The. Oh! Ariadne, ſpare this keen reproof!
Could you but know the pangs that ſtruggle here—
Ari. " Theſeus, you weep! you weep o'er my afflictions;

" You

" You feel my wrongs, yet barb'rous ev'n in pity,
" You fix the shaft of anguish in my heart!
The. " On me, on me the weight of ruin falls;
" 'Tis I am plung'd in woe; a man condemn'd,
" To wander o'er the world." Alas, 'tis fate,
Fate drives me on. If you forget a wretch,
The prey of grief, the sport of fortune's malice:
And if a monarch, to reward your virtues,
Prepares th' imperial wreathe to deck your brow——
Ari. Is that the recompence I wish'd to gain?
" Too well you know this heart. Had Periander
" A wider empire than e'er monarch rul'd;
" And you were helpless, destitute of fortune,
" I had been, heav'n can witness! happy with you,
" In loving you, I sought yourself alone.
The. " For all this waste of generous affection,
" Calamity is all that Theseus brings.
Ari. Come lead me hence to some far distant wild,
Where human footstep never prints a trace?
There bless'd with thee I could for ever dwell,
" Thron'd in thy heart, the mistress of thy love.
" *The.* Here happiness awaits you; here you're destin'd
" The mild vicegerent of the gods on earth.
" In that bright sphere where you serenely shine,
" The pattern of all virtue, temp'ring justice
" With mercy, and diffusing blessings round you,
" With tears of joy mankind will own your sway.
Ari. Oh, vile ingrate!
" *The.* If you will deign to hear me:
" Though great my crimes——
" *Ari.* Thou traitor! was it thus
" You look'd and talk'd, when first I saw and lov'd?
" Your doom was fix'd; the officers of vengeance
" Remorseless led you forth; my trembling eye
" Pursued your steps; tears gush'd; I could not speak.
" I fled to your relief, and my undoing!
" Then ev'ry god was witness to your vows.
" The fond delusion charm'd me. I rebell'd
" Against my father; I betray'd his honour;

" And all for thee. I fled my native land.
" Nor winds, nor waves, nor exile could debar me.
" This the return!—have I deserved it of you?
" Tell me my crime; and, oh! if possible
" Teach me to think 'tis justice that I suffer;
" For ev'n in ruin I would not abhor thee."

The. You wrong me much: By yon bright stars I swear,
I never meant by base ingratitude
To fix affliction in that bosom-softness,
Thy name, thy merit, and thy wondrous goodness,
While life informs this frame, shall ever live
Esteem'd and honour'd, treasur'd in my heart.

Ari. Esteem'd and honour'd!—'twas your love you promis'd.
A monarch, saidst thou, wooes me to his arms!—
What truth, what fair return have I to give him?
Give me, barbarian! give me back my heart,
The heart you robb'd me off:—Give back my vows,
My artless vows, my pure unpledg'd affections,
With equal warmth that I may meet his love;
And not like thee, with treach'rous bland allurements
Court his embrace, and charm him to betray.

The. Then if you will, wreak your worst vengeance on me.
Ascend the throne; back to the Cretan shore
Convey me hence to glut your father's rage:
I there can die content. Or if your mercy
Permit me once again to visit Greece,
Oft I shall hear of Ariadne's name;
Well pleas'd at distance, in the humble vale
Of private life, or in the tented field,
To view the radiant glory that surrounds you,
And thank the gods for shedding blessings down
On thee and all thy race.

Ari. Ay, visit Greece;
Display to Athens all your brave exploits,
Your battles won, the nations you have conquer'd.
And let your banners, waving high in air,

Hold

Hold forth the bright inſcription to men's eyes,
'Lo, this is he who triumph'd o'er a woman.'
My death will blazon forth the fame of him,
Who freed the world from monſters of the deſert,
Who ſlew the minotaur, but could not quell
Ingratitude, that monſter of the ſoul.

The. You need not, Ariadne, Oh, you need not
Thus tear me piece-meal. My diſtracted heart
Feels in each nerve, and bleeds at every vein.

Ari. Unbidden tears, why will you fool me thus!
Theſe tears that fall, that thus guſh out perforce,
Are not the tears of ſupplicating love.—
They are the tears of burning indignation,
Of ſhame, and rage, and pride, and conſcious virtue;
Virtue that feels, feels at the very heart
Each ſtab inhuman treachery has given,
Yet ſees that calm tranquillity in guilt.
See me no more; to morrow ſpread your ſails,
But take not, Sir, the partner of your heart;—
No,—dare not, on thy life, convey her hence.
Go, ſail for Athens,
Alone, heart-broken, comfortleſs; like me
Plung'd in deſpair,
Farewell, for ever, Oh, ungrateful man?

Enter PHÆDRA.

Phæ. Once more reſtor'd to liberty and life. [*To* The.

The. Oh, death were happineſs to what I feel!

" *Ari.* See me no more; to morrow ſpread your ſails;
" Take in your train the partner of your heart.—
" She ſhall not go;—once more I'll ſee the king,
" And dare not on thy life convey her hence.

" *Phæ.* What meddling fiend inflames you thus to madneſs?

" Hear,

" Hear, Ariadne, hear.——
" *Ari.* Go, ſail for Athens, [*To The.*
" Alone, heart-broken, comfortleſs ; like me
" Plung'd in deſpair ; like me, depriv'd of all
" Your heart held dear,
" *Phæ.* Let me appeaſe your wrath.
" *Ari.* I will deſcend to pray'rs and tears no more,
" Farewell for ever ; Oh, ungrateful man !
[*Exit.*
" *The.*" Diſtraction !—madneſs !—Oh, ſhe has deſtroy'd
My peace of mind for ever!
Phæ. Theſeus, no :——
My lenient care ſhall mitigate your grief.
The. For thee, my Phædra, I bear all for thee —
Since liberty is mine, let me employ it
To ſerve our mutual bliſs. The time admits
No dull delay. This moment I muſt leave thee.
Phæ. Ah !—whither do you go ?
The. Obſerve me well,
That path that winds along the barren heath,
Leads to the mountain's ridge : there down the ſteep
A ſoft declivity will guide your ſteps
To Neptune's temple, ſhelter'd in the grove.
There I expect you.
Phæ. Wherefore ?—what intent ?—
Unfold the dark deſign ; my fears alarm me.
The. No more ;—the ſun deſcends, and ſable night
Draws o'er the face of things her duſky veil,
With cautious ſtep proceed ; but, ere you go,
Watch Ariadne :—here beguile her ſtay,
If ſhe purſues me, all is loſt for ever,
Farewell, farewell, I truſt my fate with thee.
[*Exit.*
Phæ Oh, how my boſom pants with doubt and fear !
What may this mean ?—ſome dread event impends.
He will not—no—preſerve him, gracious powers!

Let

Let him not, prompted by despair, attempt
Beyond his strength, and rush on sure destruction.

Enter ARIADNE.

Ari. Where, Phædra, whither is the traitor fled?
Phæ. Oh, you have been to blame!—with haggard eyes
Upturn'd to Heaven, he paus'd, and heav'd a sigh,
As if his lab'ring heart would burst his frame,
And leave him here, a pale, a breathless corpse,
At length with haste, with fury in his look,
But blessing still your name, he rush'd along,
And vanish'd from my sight.
Ari. The barb'rous man!
Did he deny his falsehood?—Did one tear
Speak his compunction? Did he once relent?
In guilt obdurate! did you mark his mien,
The pride, the scorn that darted from his eye?
Phæ. What choice was left him, when with fierce disdain
You spurn'd him from you?
Ari. Therefore did he shun me?
Ungen'rous man! he saw I lov'd him most,
Then when enrag'd I pour'd my curses on him:
My heartstrings even then were twin'd about him.
Once more I'll see him: should he sail for Athens,
'Tis fix'd to follow him. "He will not then
"Dare to avow a treachery like this.
"His glory is at stake: with one accord
"All hearts declare for me. The sons of Greece,
"For all my sorrows, all my suffe:ings past,
"Wish to reward me in their hero's arms."
Phæ. And does Perithous join you? does he mean
To waft you o'er the deep?

Ari.

Ari. His ship already
From last night's storm refitted, courts the breeze,
And even now prepares to plough the deep.
Phæ. Theseus, the while, in pining discontent,
Forlorn and wretched on the blasted heath,
Sighs to the winds, and drinks his falling tears.
Ari. Oh, fly, pursue him! calm his troubled spirit!
" Still, traitor as he is, he may relent.
" For Oh, too well I know his godlike nature;
" Know the mild virtues that adorn his mind,
" And more than speak in each enchanting look."
Go seek him, Phædra: tell him all my woes,
And reconcile his heart to love and me.———
But hark!—some step this way———
Phæ. Perithous comes.
" *Ari.* Haste—fly—pursue him—find the barbarous man."
" *Phæ.*" I leave you now.
Ari. Farewell.
Phæ. Where shall we meet?
Ari. In yonder palace.
Phæ. There you may expect me. [*Exit.*
Ari. Oh, grant her power to touch, to melt his heart!

Enter PERITHOUS.

Perit. I bring you tidings may revive your hopes.—
Theseus may still be thine.
Ari. May still be mine!
Perit. Yes:—Periander, should he still persist
To hold you here a captive, sees his danger,
Crete arms against him: Athens too will claim you,
And let destruction loose. To cope with both,

Not

Not even the ſoul of Periander dares.
He muſt releaſe you: then you ſail for Greece.
Theſeus will there be yours: his ſolemn vows,
And the vaſt debt of gratitude he owes,
Join'd by the public voice, will bind him to you.
Ari. But if conſtraint alone——Ah! can you think
That his relenting heart will feel remorſe?
" *Perit.* The indignation of mankind will wara him,
" Returning virtue then———
" *Ari.* If aught can waken
" A ſpark of love in that obdurate breaſt;"
A look, a ſigh, impaſſion'd from the heart,
Will heal my ſorrows, and, with tears of joy,
Make me forgive him all. I burn once more
To wander with him o'er the roaring deep.—
And has the king conſented?
Perit. Ev'n now I left him
In cloſe debate, and onward to this ſpot
Bending his eager ſtep. With friendly counſels
Archon attends, and ſeconds all I wiſh.
Lo, where he comes this way. Retire a while:
Yon' grove will give you ſhelter: there remain,
A ſingle glance from thoſe perſuaſive eyes
May once again inflame his fierce deſires,
And reaſon then will plead your cauſe in vain.
Ari. May all your words ſink melting to his ſoul!
[*Exit.*
Perit. Now, gods, aſſiſt me! If I now ſucceed,
My fears ſubſide, and danger is no more.

Enter PERIANDER.

Perian. Perithous, hear: this hour ends all debate,
My reſolution's fix'd: then urge no more
Your haughty claim: 'tis torture to my heart.

Perit.

Perit. A heart like thine will generouſly love.
You will not force the princeſs to your arms,
Nor light with Hymen's torch the flames of war.
Perian. Ha! doſt thou deem me of ſo fierce a ſpirit,
To tyrannize the fears of Ariadne?
No,—her own lip, the muſic of that voice,
To my delighted ear, ſhall breathe the promiſe,
The ſoft avowal of our mutual flame.
Perit. She doats on Theſeus: the wide world has heard
The ſtory of her love. And can you hope
To turn away the current of affection
From him, who firſt awak'd her young deſires,
Still fans the flame, and lords it o'er her ſoul?
Perian. Let him depart: I have releas'd him to you.
Then Ariadne will reſent her wrongs,
Incline her heart, and liſten to my vows.
Bear your friend hence; my orders ſhall be iſſued.
For Ariadne trouble me no more. [*Exit.*
Perit. Proud monarch, go! This night ſhall mar your hopes;
This very night, while ſleep lulls all your guards,
She ſhall embark. When lawleſs pow'r prevails,
The noble end muſt juſtify the means.

Enter ARIADNE.

Ari. Thou generous man! haſt thou regain'd my freedom?
Perit. This very night we quit the hated ſhore.
Enquire no more: you muſt embark with me——
For Theſeus, he will gladly join our flight.
Ari. All things invite us: from the ſky burſts forth

A ſtream

A ſtream of radiance, and the level main
Preſents a wide expanſe of quivering light.
Where is my ſiſter?
Perit. She muſt here remain.
Ari. No, it were perfidy, a breach of friendſhip.
She fled with me: our hearts were ever join'd
By the ſweet ties of friendſhip and of love.
Perit. Here ſhe muſt ſtay; your happineſs requires it.
Ari. What is her crime? Ah, why ſhould we deſert her!
Perit. Seek not to know too much.
Ari. No, Phædra, no;
I cannot leave thee here.

Enter ARCHON.

Arc. This very moment
A ſoldier from the harbour brings this letter.
To you it is addreſs'd [*Gives a letter to* Perit.
Perit. And comes from Theſeus.
Ari. From Theſeus!—wherefore?—whence?—what new event?
Perit. [*Reads.*] 'My heart 's too full to vent itſelf in words.
'I know my conduct will be blam'd by all.
'I will not varniſh it with vain excuſe,
'I ſeiz'd your ſhip: we have already paſs'd
'The head land of the harbour.'
Oh! this conſummates all.
Ari. Why doſt thou pauſe?
Proceed; go on; let me drink deep of horror.
[*Taking the letter, endeavours to proceed, but cannot. She returns it to* Perithous]
'*Perit.* [*Reads.*] We have already paſs'd
'The head-land of the harbour: " ſunk in grief,

" Diſtracted with her fears, in wild amaze,
" Phædra has join'd my flight——
" Is Phædra with him ?
" *Arc.* They embark'd together."
Ari. [*Reads.*] ' To Ariadne
' Be ev'ry duty paid, each tender care,
' Aſſuag'd her ſorrows : Periander's love
' Will charm each ſenſe, and teach her to forget ;
' Perhaps in time, when ev'ry bliſs attends her,
' To pardon Phædra, and the wretched Theſeus.'
Is Phædra with him ?
Arc. *They embark'd together.*
" *Ari.* All juſt and righteous"——— [Ari. *falls on the ground.*
Perit. Ah ! ſhe faints ! ſhe faints :
Bring inſtant help ; aſſiſt her, lend your aid.
Enter attendant Virgins.
Oh ! wretched princeſs ! would the gods allow you
To breathe your laſt, and never wake again
To this bad world, 'twere happineſs indeed !
She ſtirs, ſhe moves ; the blood returns again,
But oh ! to make her feel the weight of woe,
And ſee the deſolation that ſurrounds her.
" *Ari.* Where have my ſenſes wander'd ? Why around me
" Are you all fix'd, the ſtatues of deſpair ?
" Oh ! I remember——Open earth, and hide me :
" In your cold caves you never yet receiv'd
" A wretch betray'd, undone, and loſt as I am.
" *Perit.*" Afflicted mourner, raiſe thee from the earth.
Thy woes indeed are great.
Ari. O, ſay—could you believe it ? [*As ſhe riſes.*
Phædra has join'd his flight ; ſhe too betrays me.
She was my other ſelf ; for ever dear ;
Dear as the drops that circled in my veins,
But now, ah ! now, to warm this heart no more.
Perhaps even now ſhe gazes on his charms,
Hangs on each accent, catches from thoſe eyes
The ſweet enchantment ; " knows I ſhed theſe tears ;

" Know

" Knows that I beat this breaſt, and rend this hair,
" And tell my ſorrows to theſe craggy cliffs.
" And rave and ſhriek, in madneſs and deſpair."
Haſte, fly, purſue them, launch into the main,
Arm all your ſhips, bring ſwords, bring liquid fire,
Fly, overtake them, whelm them in the deep, oh!—

[*Falls into the arms of her attendants.*

" *Perit.* Attend her, virgins, with your tend'reſt duty.

Exeunt Ariadne *with attendants.*

" *Arc.* If this be thy contrivance———
" *Perit.* Charge me not
" With a black deed that has undone my friend,
" And to the lateſt time muſt brand his name,
" I feel for him; I feel for Ariadne.
" She now demands our ſympathy and care.

[*Exeunt.*

" *The Back Scene opens; the Harbour and the Sea in view.*"

Enter ARIADNE *with Attendants.*

" *Ari.* Behold, look there, ſee where the veſſel bounds,
" Oh: horror, horror! how the rapid prow
" Glides through the waves! Will none purſue the traitor?
" *1ſt. Vir.* Alas, my royal miſtreſs, 'tis in vain.
" *Ari.* Turn, Theſeus, turn; 'tis Ariadne calls,
" Return barbarian! whither do you fly?

"This way direct your course. stay, Phædra, stay.
"See how they bound along the level main,
"And cleave their way; and catch each gale that blows.
"Inhuman treachery!

[*Leans on her attendants.*

"*Perit.* Her grief exhausts her strength, but soon again
"Despair will rouse her with redoubled force.
"*Ari.* Heart-piercing sight! And see the traitor still
"Pursues his course. Yon' glitt'ring host of stars
"Lend all their rays; the elements combiné!
"Ye winds, ye waves, you too are leagu'd against me;
"You join with guilt, accomplices in fraud!
"All false as Theseus; all as Phædra false;
"Officious all to end this wretched being.
"Your victory will soon be gained: That pang,
"Oh! this cold tremor—'tis the hand of death——
"I hope it is; my grave is all I ask.

Sits down on the point of a rock.

Enter PERIANDER, PERITHOUS, *and* ARCHON.

Perian. Oh, dire event!
"*Perit.* See where the beauteous mourner
"Grows to the rock, and thinks herself to stone!"
Perian. Rise, princess, rise, and let us bear you hence
To your own palace, where the storm of grief
Will soon subside, and peace, and love, and joy,
Revisit your sad heart.

"[*They lead her forward.*"

"*Ari.*

" *Ari.* No, never, never;
" My easy heart will be deceiv'd no more.
" *Perian.* For thee love still has new delights in store,
" Whole years of bliss."———
Ari. Why do you smile upon me?
I never serv'd you; never sav'd your life;
Made you no promise: why should you deceive me?
Perian. May sweet oblivion of her past afflictions
Steal gently o'er her soul. Restore her, heaven!
Ari. Have you a sister?——She will break your heart.
Perian. I come to calm your griefs, and crown your days
With love sincere, and everlasting truth.
" *Ari.* All truth is fled; long since she fled the earth,
" Tir'd of her pilgrimage. Why, holy powers!
" Why leave poor mortals crawling here below,
" Where there's no confidence, no truth, no faith!
" All nature moves by your eternal law;
" Truth is the law of man, and yet she's fled.
" I see her there—there near the throne of Jove,
" Her garments white as her own candid mind;
" She looks with pity on this vale of error,
" And drops a tear: while falsehood in disguise,
" With specious seeming, walks her deadly round,
" And mask'd in friendship, where she smiles, destroys.
" *Perian.* Let me conduct you: trust your friends."
Ari. You look
As if I might believe you: so did Theseus;
But where, where is he now?——'To Ariadne
'Be every duty paid, each tender care!'
Oh! artful man!——Look there! I see him still;
I see the ship; it lessens to my view,
It lessens still! and now, just now it fades!

It fades away, it melts into the clouds!
Scarce, scarce perceiv'd! 'tis gone, 'tis loſt,
For ever, ever loſt! is that the laſt,
The laſt ſad glimpſe? and muſt I linger here?
Die, Ariadne, die, and end your woes.
[*Stabs herſelf.*

Perian. Oh! fatal raſhneſs! quick, bring every help!

Perit. Deep in her veins the poniard drinks her blood.

Ari. 'Twas Theſeus' gift: his beſt, his kindeſt preſent;
As ſuch I ſheath'd it in my very heart.

" *Perian.* Her fluttering ſoul is on the wing to leave her,

" *Ari.* Elyſium is before me; let not Theſeus
" Purſue me thither; in thoſe realms of bliſs
" Let my departed ſpirit know ſome reſt.
" Oh! let me feel ingratitude no more.
" Keep Theſeus here in this abode of guilt;
" This world is his; let him remain with Phædra;
" Let him be happy—no, the fates forbid it;
" They will deceive each other."

Perian. Ah! that wound,
Pours faſt the ſtream of life.

Ari. It gives no pain.
It is the ſtab fell perfidy has given,
That rankles here. Oh! raiſe me, raiſe me up.
" No, let me ſee the light of heaven no more."
Perithous, you behold your friend's exploit!
I thank you, Periander; you have been
Kind, good, and tender. May ſome worthier bride,
Adorn'd with all that virtue adds to beauty,
Endear the joys of life.——Alas, I die!
No mother here with pious hand to cloſe
My faded eyes; no father o'er my urn
To drop a tear, and ſoothe my penſive ſhade.
" No; I deſerve it; I betray'd them both.
" The barb'rous man!——He ſtabb'd me to the heart!
" And yet even then I knew but half my wrongs."
And you too, Phædra!——Oh! [*Dies.*

Perian.

Perian. She's gone, and with her what a noble mind!
What gen'rous virtues are there laid in ruin!
Perit. Thou injur'd innocence! oppreſs'd with wrongs,
And ſore beſet, there reſts thy languiſh'd head.
Oh! when the gods beſtow on mortal man
That bloom of beauty, thoſe exalted charms,
By virtue dignified, they give the beſt,
The nobleſt gift their bounty has in ſtore:
A gift to be eſteem'd, ador'd by all;
To be protected by the ſoldier's valour,
Not thus betray'd, abandon'd to deſpair,
And the keen pangs of ill requited love.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

PRO

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PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY I. P. KEMBLE.

Spoken by Mr. WROUGHTON,

WHENE'ER the Poet, in retiring vein,
Proclaims his purpose ne'er to write again,
The threaten'd Town interprets the kind way,
And takes an interest in his next last play.

Not that our Bard has play'd you fast and loose,
Or pleads this general candour for excuse;
He dares not trifle with the public sense,
But thinks such folly downright impudence;
Brought, not advancing, since he then appears,
To risk the well won fame of forty years,
He trusts distinct indulgence you'll afford—
Not he but Ariadne, breaks his word.

From ancient stores we take our plot to-night,
Form'd on the mournful tale of Theseus' flight;
The time, that golden Æra, some relate,
When equal Minos rul'd the Cretan state.

Hail, holy Sage! who taught'st licentious man
To find his freedom where the laws began;
Whose fame in arms, redoubted from afar,
From thine own shores deterr'd invasive war—
Whilst thy mild genius o'er a prosperous isle
Gave every good and every grace to smile;
'Till thine to all thy subjects were as dear,
As George's virtues to his Britons here.

To

PROLOGUE.

To all our author bids me humbly bend,
But deprecate no foe, and court no friend:
With grateful pride he thinks of honors past,
And hopes you'll bid those valu'd honors last.
Freely to you he now commends his cause—
Should he deserve—you'll not withhold applause.

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EPI-

EPILOGUE.

LADIES—though ſcarce alive—quite out of breath,
I come—to talk a little after death;
When tir'd of woe, and daggers, and all that,
Nothing revives us like a little chat.

Now—ſo the laws of Epilogue ordain,
All ſhould be turn'd to jeſt, and flippant ſtrain;
And I, with points moſt miſerably witty,
Should play the mimic, and lampoon the city.

Far other motives bid me now appear;
Far other ſentiments are ſtruggling here:
I come to view this circle, fair and bright,
And thank you for each tear you've ſhed to-night;
The tear, that gives the ſoft endearing grace;
Virtue's coſmetic for the loveliest face;
That ſhows the features in their genuine hue,
Like roſes bluſhing through the morning dew.

Ye men,—ye boaſted lords of the creation,
Who give your Ariadnes ſuch vexation;
May I approach you, pray? and may I dare
Aſk why you droop?—and why that languid air?
'Tis ſympathy in guilt; and Theſeus' caſe
With riſing bluſhes crimſons ev'ry face;
Cenſure on fraud like his, you own muſt fall:
Too well you know—he repreſents you all.

And yet you've ſome excuſe; theſe modiſh days
Lend a few tints to varniſh all your ways.

When

EPILOGUE.

When a GRAND SWEEPSTAKES *to Newmarket calls,*
And FIVE TO FOUR *each groom, each jockey bawls:*
What beauty then can lure you from the course,
And hope—you'll love her BETTER *than your* HORSE?

When to the Club the gaming rage invites,
And fascinating FARO *claims your nights;*
The tender passion then intrudes no more,
And FORTUNE *is the* VENUS *you adore.*
But is she constant?—Loss on loss ensues,
And bonds, and mortgages, attorneys, Jews:
Love then may well his softer rights forego,
Spread his light wings, and fly the scene of woe.

But now the times a nobler plea may yield;
A War invites you;—arm, and take the field.
The SONS OF FRANCE *would fain subvert your laws;*
Go forth the champions of your country's cause.
Behold the bright example of the day,
Go—where our ROYAL FREDERICK *leads the way;*
So Albion's liberties secure shall stand,
And KING *and* LORDS *and* COMMONS *guard the land.*

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